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ASIA

SEPTEMBER/  
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## Stirring things up

Every so often, we get struck by the notion that we have somehow slipped into an unconscious complacency.

While perhaps a happy burden that comes with being swaddled by the familiar comforts of everyday life, even the most rooted of us still crave the occasional escape, a respite from the mundane.

The good news is, you won't have to travel too far to find it. Malaysia has an abundance of private islands that will satisfy your adventurous side (Pg 76), while the fresh faced Lagoi Bay in Bintan promises pampering in the lap of luxury (Pg 72). For those looking to venture out further, join the festivities in Nagasaki, or rub shoulders with Melbourne's social and sporting elite?

If you think you've seen Provence, think again (Pg 47). Uncover this historic French city's hidden gems as you wade along the secluded beaches of Les Calanques, bask in the staggering beauty of mountainous Les Alpilles, and ride alongside brightly shirted cowboys in wild Camargue. Experience another side of Hollywood (Pg 36) by traversing the epic landscapes of one of the world's grandest movie sets – visit reel-life Egypt, France, and Africa, all without ever leaving the great state of California.

As for our cover story (Pg 62), there is a Mongolian proverb that goes, "He who drinks, dies; he who does not drink, dies as well," a unique insight into the dauntless people that call this wild expanse home. Perhaps, it also serves as a timely reminder that we should not be afraid of some constructive upheaval once in a while.

After all, he who ventures, gains.

**Melissa Lorraine Chua,**  
Associate Editor

**CLOCKWISE**  
An imposing 40-metre-high statue of Chinggis Khaan (p.67); Harold Greenberg props up the bar (p.42); Van Gogh's former home in St-Paul Asylum (p.56)



**THIS MONTH'S COVER**  
Mongolia  
PHOTOGRAPH  
DREAMSTIME



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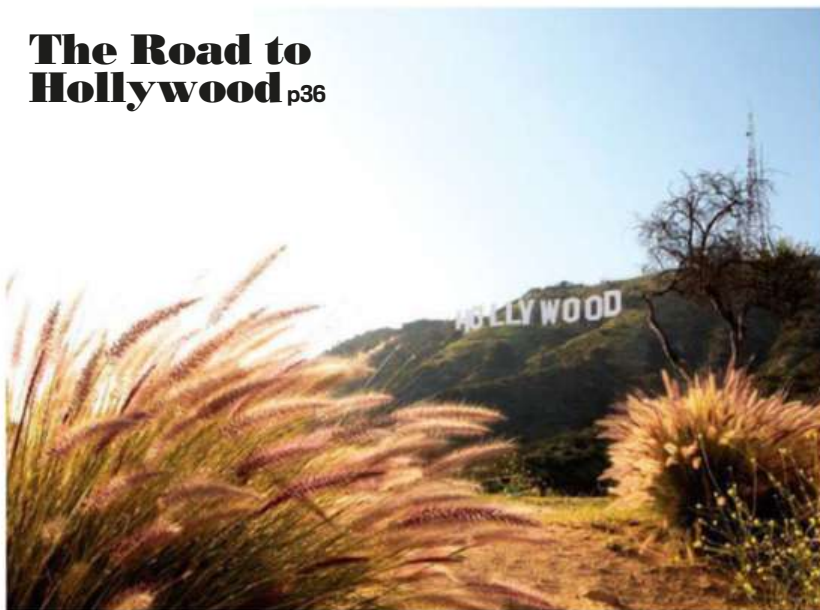




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Activities	Sleeping	Shopping	Climate
Courses	Eating	Information & Transport	Getting around

All prices correct at time of going to press. Prices for hotel rooms are for double, en suite rooms with breakfast in low season, unless otherwise stated. Flight prices are for the cheapest return fares, including one piece of hold baggage, unless otherwise stated.



# How to make this your magazine

Send us your questions, pics or insider tips and we'll publish the best. Here are some of the ways you can get in touch with us...



## Postcards

Wherever you've been this month, send us your photos\* and tell us the stories behind them. Email [lpmagazine@regentmedia.sg](mailto:lpmagazine@regentmedia.sg) – see page 8

\*WE CAN ONLY PRINT POSTCARDS SUPPLIED IN LANDSCAPE (RATHER THAN PORTRAIT) FORMAT.

## Easy Trips

Got any places you'd like to travel to? Our picks are all within a 10 hour radius thereabouts, but if you've recommendations, do email us at [asklpmagazine@regentmedia.sg](mailto:asklpmagazine@regentmedia.sg) – see page 31



## Mini Guides

Send us your tips for Manchester, Brussels, Monaco, Zagreb, Algarve and Budapest to [lpmagazine@regentmedia.sg](mailto:lpmagazine@regentmedia.sg) – see page 85

## Our promise to you

“Lonely Planet Magazine provides trusted, independent travel advice and information that has been gathered without fear or favour. We aim to provide you with options that cover a range of budgets and we reveal the positive and negative of all locations we visit.

Because we believe it is important that our journalists experience first-hand what they're writing about and because you require comprehensive information from every corner of the world, at times it may be necessary for us to seek assistance from travel providers such as tourist boards, airlines, hotels, national parks and so forth. However, when receiving such assistance, we ensure our editorial integrity and independence are not compromised through the following measures: by publishing information on all appropriate travel suppliers and not just those who provided us with assistance, and by never promising to offer anything in return, such as positive coverage.”

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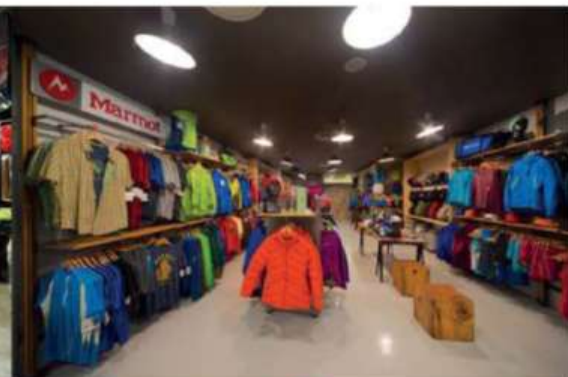
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# Postcard

Where you've been and what you've seen

The Royal Pavilion was built as a seaside retreat for the Prince of Wales – later King George IV – between 1787–1823







## Brighton, England


### Reflected glory



“ I recently went to visit my sister in Brighton, my second trip there. I wanted to capture

the Royal Pavilion in the blue hour of twilight, and spent an evening walking around trying to find the best spot. Unfortunately, the weather was bad and I was disappointed with all my photos. On the last day of my trip we went to the Seven Sisters cliffs but, as it got later and later, I couldn't stop thinking about the Royal Pavilion. We rushed back and arrived just in time for me to get this shot, placing the camera almost at water level to capture the building reflected in this small pond. It was the only picture I took there.



\*\*\*\*\*  
 **Jakub Abramowicz** is a dentist currently living in Blackburn



# Calendar

Mark these dates for some of the best events and shows around the world

## SEPTEMBER 2015



### 17 to 20 Symbiosis Gathering

California, USA: Live and breathe creativity at the tenth iteration of this camping festival favoured by artists, performers and creators. Located at the scenic Woodward Reservoir situated near the border of Yosemite National Park, attendees can party in style to live acts at four lakeside dance floors. Art installations, dialogue sessions and a marketplace stocked with organic food are also available.

[symbiosisgathering.com](http://symbiosisgathering.com)

### 18 to 20 F1 Singapore Grand Prix

Singapore: Cheer with the crowd as cars zoom at breakneck speeds pass hairpin corners as they attempt to overtake one another. Known for being the acclaimed automobile racing event's only night race, admire the spectacular city skyline as it comes to life in the dark. End your day dancing to performances by renowned international acts such as Pharrell Williams, Maroon 5 and Bon Jovi, and groove to local sensation The Sam Willows for a more homegrown flavour.

[singaporegp.sg](http://singaporegp.sg)



### 19 to 20 Kishiwada Danjiri Matsuri

Osaka, Japan: Watch teams of up to a thousand men carrying intricate wooden floats known as danjiris, which are rumoured to house deities, race through the streets of the castle town. Master carpenters dance on the roof of their creations to entertain the crowd while staying balanced as the floats swerve precariously around corners. Stay for the evening, where the pace slows down for a procession of surviving danjiris. Lit up by lanterns, the floats make a pretty sight.

[city.kishiwada.osaka.jp](http://city.kishiwada.osaka.jp)



### 12 to 11 Oct Floriade

Canberra, Australia: Bask in the presence of a million blooming flowers of different varieties at the Commonwealth Park. First held in 1988, the month-long festival also includes horticultural workshops, cultural celebrations and other recreational activities. Come evening, a special five-night festival for adults spices up the event with comedic acts, roving entertainers and live DJs. Enchanting light shows will also cast the flowers in an ethereal glow.

[floriadeaustralia.com](http://floriadeaustralia.com)



### 25 to 27 Mid-Autumn Festival

Hong Kong: Partake in the festivities of one of the biggest Chinese celebrations of the year by feasting on jazzed-up mooncakes, round pastries traditionally filled with lotus-bean but now made with more innovative flavours such as green tea, and admiring the full moon. The Hong Kong rendition includes a rousing fire dragon dance with a 67-metre long dragon weaved out of rattan, hemp and straw, lantern exhibitions and carnivals throughout the island.

[discoverhongkong.com](http://discoverhongkong.com)



### 30 to 6 Oct Shanghai International Music Fireworks Festival

Shanghai, China: Boom goes the fireworks high above your head, each explosion perfectly in sync with the chosen soundtrack's rhythm. Each year, six famous fireworks companies compete to clinch the gold at this themed fireworks display competition, judged by musicians, firework experts and writers. Watch the remarkable one-of-a-kind presentations light up the night sky in all their glory – you will remember the scene for a long time.

[shfireworks.org](http://shfireworks.org)



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# Calendar

## OCTOBER 2015



### 1 to 11 Jinju Namgang Yudeung Festival

Jinju, South Korea: Write a wish on your paper lantern and set it afloat in the Namgang River alongside countless others. The numerous lanterns at the festival come in all shapes and sizes, ranging from prominent historical figures to popular cartoon characters. For some romance, cross the floating love bridge with your partner. Otherwise, stay on the banks and enjoy the citizen street parade and watch the water fireworks shoot up behind lit-up floating lanterns.

📍 [english.visitkorea.or.kr](http://english.visitkorea.or.kr)

### 13 to 22 Navratri

Mysore, India: Dance a traditional Gujarati dance known as Garba, or join in the singing of Hindu devotional songs named bhajans at this mass community event. The grand Mysore Palace will be dressed up in thousands of lights to form a twinkling sight. This lavish celebration also includes a parading elephant, who will carry a golden pavilion with a figurine of the Goddess Chamundeshwari atop its decorated body.

📍 [mysoredasara.gov.in](http://mysoredasara.gov.in)



### 15 to 23 Vegetarian Festival

Phuket, Thailand: Not an occasion for the weak hearted, the festival features Mah Songs, believed to be human hosts for the spirits of divine beings, piercing varying body parts with a startling array of objects. Believers also test their faith at shrines by walking on fire, climbing ladders made of sharp blades and pouring hot oil over their bodies. Despite the apparent danger, celebrants believe they are protected from injuries during the festivities.

📍 [phuket.com](http://phuket.com)



### 31 The Village Halloween Parade

New York, USA: Dress up in your spookiest costumes for a parade through the streets of Sixth Avenue. The chosen theme for the annual mass event this year is 'Devil May Care', and hundreds of puppets, 53 different bands each playing their own tunes, dancers, artists and kindred costume-wearers will journey alongside you. Remember to drop-by the after party at Webster Hall, where the best-dressed participant of the night will win an award – you may just walk away with the grand prize.

📍 [halloween-nyc.com](http://halloween-nyc.com)

### Now to 11 World of WearableArt Awards Show

Wellington, NZ: Dive into a world of wonder and fashion madness at this show, which features wacky creations crafted from all sorts of materials. Categories this year include 'Imaginary Friends', 'Uniform' and 'Other Worlds' alongside a wearable technology award. Known as New Zealand's largest and most dynamic art event, each piece of original clothing will be displayed alongside theatrics and dances to create an entertaining two-hour show.

📍 [worldofwearableart.com](http://worldofwearableart.com)



### 28 to 1 Nov Ubud Writers & Readers Festival

Ubud, Indonesia: Ready your books and brains for this cultural and literary event, touted as Southeast Asia's greatest. Writers, thinkers, performers and artists come together to celebrate knowledge through events revolving around the chosen theme, '17,000 Islands of Imagination'. The festival also coincides with the 50th anniversary of the 1965 Indonesian anti-communist massacre, and notions of remembrance and reconciliation will feature strongly.

📍 [ubudwritersfestival.com](http://ubudwritersfestival.com)



# Globetrotter

A WORLD OF TRAVEL NEWS AND DISCOVERIES

*Local Knowledge*

## My Lisbon

Ceramicist CATIA PESSOA has lived in the Portuguese capital all her life. The city is famous for its distinctive tilework (*azulejos*), used to decorate everything from churches to subways, but Catia's creations are anything but square. From bespoke bowls and plates for local restaurants to more sculptural pieces, the full range of her work can be seen at her studio and shop, Caulino Ceramics, on the edge of the city's historic Alfama district. She finds Lisbon life forever inspiring, saying, 'Although it's a big city – constantly changing, with new places opening all the time – it's also peaceful. There's still space to think.'

[caulinoceramics.com](http://caulinoceramics.com)



# Local Knowledge

## 'DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS, EVERYONE IN LISBON SPENDS ALL DAY OUTSIDE, IN THE STREETS – NO-ONE GOES HOME UNTIL IT'S TIME TO GO TO SLEEP'

► Lisbon is creative, historic and sociable, and a place that combines all the faces of the city is A Outra Face Da Lua (1), a vintage shop that's also a café. It sells clothes and accessories that date back to the '50s, and it's a great place to find something different – I have lots of hats from there.

📍 [aoutrafacedalua.com](http://aoutrafacedalua.com)

► For lunch, I head to A Nova Pombalina (2), which serves traditional Portuguese fast food and fruit juices. They make the best sandwiches in town, and are famous for their leitão (suckling pig) sandwich on fresh bread, but I prefer the one they make with fried squid and lemon.

📍 A Nova Pombalina, Rua do Comércio, 2

► Lisbon has some beautiful gardens, good places to spend an afternoon wandering and having a picnic. My two favourites are Jardim do Torel, which is high up, with great views over the city, and Tapada das Necessidades (3), from where you can see the Tejo River.

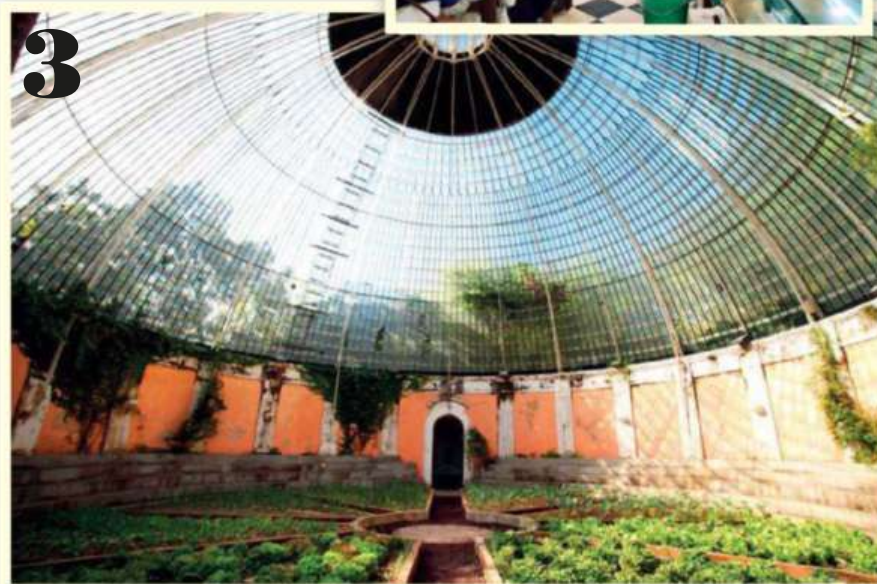
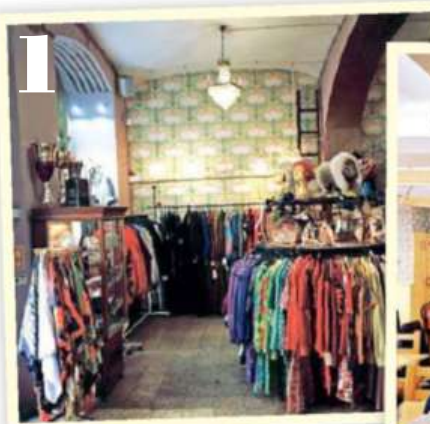
► My studio sits between three central Lisbon neighbourhoods, of which Alfama (4) is the most lively. It is the city's oldest district, and has lots of restaurants, bars and places to hear fado music. Hidden among the narrow streets is a small hotel, Memmo Alfama, with a lovely terrace. I go there after work to drink a glass of wine by the pool and enjoy the view over the rooftops. From here, it's a short walk over to Cruzes Credo (5), which does good burgers and a great dish with mushrooms and asparagus. It's next door to the old cathedral, so if the weather is nice – which it usually is – I sit outside and admire the cathedral's smooth stone walls.

📍 [memmohotels.com/alfama](http://memmohotels.com/alfama)

Cruzes Credo Café, Cruzes da Sé, 29

► On Tuesdays and Saturdays there's a great flea market, the Feira da Ladra in the Campo de Santa Clara, which sells everything you could possibly imagine. Once all the traders have packed up and gone home I head inside to have dinner at Santa Clara dos Cogumelos (6), a restaurant where every dish is made with a different kind of mushroom – even the deserts.

📍 [santaclaradoscogumelos.com](http://santaclaradoscogumelos.com)



PHOTOGRAPHS: WILL ELSOM, LUIS LAMELA/ALAMY, EDUARDO AMARO



# Two sides to... Edinburgh

## Old Town



### STAY

Set in medieval houses off the Royal Mile, Old Town Chambers' apartments have 16th-century fireplaces and exposed stone walls (from US\$281; lateralcity.com).

### EAT

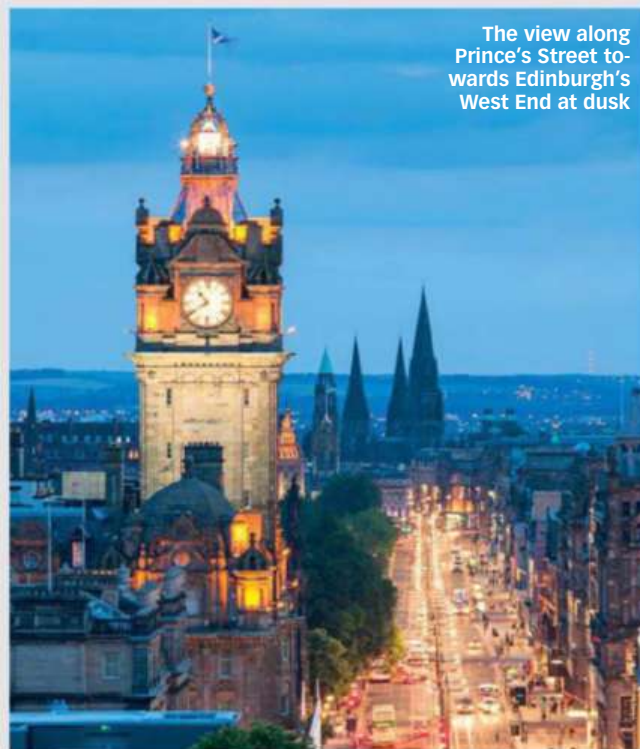
Tuck into seasonal Scottish food, such as grouse (pictured) and Isle of Mull scallops, at the magical Secret Garden, within a historic courtyard (mains from US\$26; thewitchery.com).

### DO

Brave Edinburgh's most haunted places on City of the Dead's riotous tours to underground vaults and a graveyard roamed by a notorious poltergeist (tours from US\$15; cityofthedeatours.com).

### DRINK

Hidden down a narrow backstreet inside a former pumping station, The Devil's Advocate serves more than 200 whiskies from Scotland and around the world, plus an array of craft beers, wines and inventive cocktails (whisky from US\$5; devilsadvocateedinburgh.co.uk).



The view along Prince's Street towards Edinburgh's West End at dusk



## New Town

### STAY

Get a feel for Georgian Edinburgh at Two Hillside Crescent, a b&b with luxurious rooms set in an artfully restored townhouse (from US\$150; twohillsidecrescent.com).



### EAT

A pearl among city eateries since 1863, the Café Royal Oyster Bar serves up oysters, Shetland mussels and other seafood in an opulent room with marble floors, stained-glass windows and Royal Doulton tiled murals (oysters US\$17; caferoyaledinburgh.co.uk).



### DO

Catch a glimpse into the lives of well-heeled Edinburghers past at The Georgian House, whose restored rooms are full of period finery, from art and silverware to antique globes (admission US\$11; nts.org.uk).

### DRINK

Set amid gilded Victorian splendour, The Voodoo Rooms serves unusual cocktails, such as From Tusk Til Dawn, with vodka, lavender bitters and clove syrup, stirred with pine needle smoke (from US\$11; thevoodoorooms.com).







# City at a glance: Osaka

With an appetite for developing trade that is as insatiable as its love for culinary finesse, Osaka sets itself apart with unique traits

**Scenery and history  
await in Osaka Castle**

**J**apan's first capital and its third-largest city with a population of 2.6 million, Osaka has been a merchant hub for centuries and was also a key centre for the country's rice trade beginning in the 1600s, earning it the name of "Japan's kitchen". More recently, Osaka established a strong arts scene with the puppet

theatre genre known as Bunraku originating in 1684.

The city was formally established in 1889, with an area of 15sq km, though three ambitious expansions have grown it to the current size of 221sq km. Looking beyond the city limits, the Osaka Metropolitan Area covers 7,800sq km, and has a population of more than 17 million, making it one of the largest

metropolitan conglomerations in the world. The international airport designed by world-famous architect Renzo Piano connects directly to hubs in Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East, Europe, and North America, making Osaka a truly global city. "Kansai's economy has an influence extending beyond the region's borders, and its trends are felt throughout Japan and the rest of

Asia," says Yoshihisa Inada, Director Research at Asia Pacific Institute of Research. Such influence is evident from foreign companies – such as Ikea, Costco, Astra Zeneca, Nestle, and Haier – that have set up operations in the Kansai region.

"Osaka's economic revival is vital to helping Japan avert a default or economic crisis, as Tokyo's growth alone won't be enough to bring

WORDS: SANJAY SURANA



momentum to the country's overall economy," prefectural Governor Ichiro Matsui said in an interview with Bloomberg last year. "Other prefectures should follow suit."

Tourism is a key sector with official government statistics showing the city welcomed 1.4 million international visitors in 2009, with that number rising to 3.2 million in 2014, an increase of 130 percent. The city is aiming for a target of 3.8 million in 2015; the Osaka Government Tourism Bureau states that it "has a mission to strategically promote tourism in Osaka with the aim of attracting 6.5 million foreign tourist per annum by the year 2020". Just as impressive, the average spend of tourists that enter Japan via Kansai has risen from an average of ¥83,584 (about \$922) per person in January-March 2014, to ¥163,391 per person in January-March 2015, an increase of about 96 percent; three quarters of the visitors are from East Asia, 15 percent from the other parts of Asia, and the remaining 10 percent from the rest of the world. According to the Japan Tourism Agency's Travel & Stay Statistics Survey, Osaka's foreign visitors overnight stay ranks the highest in Japan at 16 percent (compared with 13.1 percent for

second-placed Tokyo, and 10.6 percent for third-placed Kyoto). In 2014, 69 percent of foreign travellers to Osaka were independent, more than half of them staying four to six days. The growing interest in the city has not been lost on the hotel industry — the InterContinental Osaka opened in June 2013, while the Osaka Miyako Marriott opened in April 2014. The Park Front Hotel will open at Universal Studios in August 2015 and the Rihga Royal is due to open in 2017 as part of the 3-Chome project.

The arts world continues to flourish. The Tower of the Sun, created by artist Taro Okamoto and built as part of the theme pavilion at the original Expo, is a symbol of Osaka, one of the largest public artwork pieces in Japan, and will re-open in 2017 after renovations. A new museum, tentatively known as the Osaka City Museum of Modern Art, will open in 2020. And many visitors continue to Osaka as a base to visit the ornate temples and shrines of Kyoto and Nara, both 40 minutes away by train.

The cityscape is also changing thanks to large-scale projects like Umekita, a 24ha regeneration of the Umeda neighbourhood funded by private and public investment,



Drama relived through the art of Noh

and pivotal to the city's zonal-growth strategy. During Phase 1, the new north station at the Osaka City terminal opened in 2011 and is the busiest station in Western Japan (2.3 million passengers daily). Two years later came the opening of the mixed-use complex, Grand Front Osaka. Phase 2 of Umekita promises to bring grand green spaces to northern Osaka. Further south in the city, above Osaka Abenobashi station, Abeno Harukas opened in 2014. Japan's highest skyscraper, at 300m tall and rising 65 floors, with an exterior designed by Argentine starchitect César Pelli,

it houses the national headquarters of Sharp Corporation.

Other on-going developments include the 3-Chome Joint Reconstruction Project in the Kanda district that includes a renovated concert hall and luxury hotels, and the Terrace Building (a commercial and retail building with a lush green plaza in front) that opened in May 2015. The Namba/Minatomachi district is another area earmarked by the city as a Priority Urban Development Area, and will include Namba Parks, a multi-purpose complex with green spaces built on the former site of the Osaka Baseball Stadium. According to the Emerging Trends in Real Estate Asia Pacific 2015 paper published by the non-profit Urban Land Institute research centre, Osaka is ranked third in the region (behind Tokyo and Jakarta) for investment and development prospects this year.

Looking even further into the future, the Maglev levitating train project will include Osaka in its network. The current proposal sees the section between Tokyo and Nagoya expected to open in 2027, with an extension to Osaka in 2045. But a panel comprising representatives of the Osaka prefectural government, the Osaka city government and economic organisations based in Kansai, recently urged that the Osaka date be brought forward to 2027, which would bring the city up to ¥12 trillion (about \$136 billion) in economic benefits. Such a proposal makes one thing profoundly clear — Osaka means business.



Experience Osaka from the waters





## HILTON OKINAWA CHATAN RESORT

Barely a year old, this spanking new and modern resort is peerless in satisfying even the most discerning traveller. In keeping with their vision of providing culturally relevant experiences and services, Hilton Okinawa Chatan Resort recently introduced a new experience at their in-house spa that is centred on a traditional Okinawan treatment known since the era of the Ryukyu Kingdom. Unique to Okinawa, these treatments are rendered by specially trained Ryukyu therapists, and provide a balance and rejuvenation to a day of meetings. These packages are available till the end of June 2015.

The resort offers so much convenience and variety it seems almost superfluous to step out of its elegant confines. The rooms themselves are beautifully new and invite lingering, with flat screen 40" televisions and stable wi-fi being givens. The 9-storey resort has a total of 346 guests rooms

of varying sizes, with the majority of rooms (286) being ocean-facing. Dining options abound, with an all-day dining restaurant that serves international and local food inspired by Okinawa, which needs no introduction for its reputation for its residents' longevity. Other equally gastronomically persuasive options include an Italian restaurant and an intimately inviting lobby lounge that is open all day.

However, if wanderlust overrides in situ comfort, the Mihama Town Resort American Village is a hop and a skip away. It is one of Okinawa's largest entertainment, retail and dining areas. Also very close by are Naha City and World Heritage sites.

**40-1, Mihama, Chatan-chō; tel: +81 98 901 1111;**  
**<http://www3.hilton.com>**



## THE RITZ-CARLTON, OKINAWA

This is the first luxury resort by the The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company L.L.C. in Japan – and it has chosen a spot that cannot be more favourable. The tropical island provides a perfect backdrop to the excellent services and amenities the chain is renowned for.

Situated on a hilltop, a panoramic view of the East China Sea envelopes the resort. Bordered by Kise Country Club's 18-hole championship golf course and picturesque, wooded land, this intimate 97-room property resort almost tailor-made for small-group retreats and meetings. The Ritz-Carlton, Okinawa, focuses on warmth and friendliness, bringing to the fore age-old Okinawan standards of hospitality. The concept of 'gusuku', which translates to 'guest house', is reflected throughout the property, designed to emanate a sense of cosy warmth and familiarity at every turn. The multilingual and accommodating staff further reinforce this, with highly customizable event

packages delivered seamlessly and with their trademark warmth.

A major distinguishing amenity at the resort is its premium spa, ESPA. Situated in a 2-storey stand-alone building, it is bordered by the Yambaru forest, which emanates the tranquillity of virgin space that has been untouched by time. The luxurious forest surrounds the spa, with most areas and treatment rooms having unhindered views. Products used are all created in-house, harnessing the best of essential oils and marine elements.

The Ritz-Carlton, Okinawa offers a plethora of on-site and off-site activities ranging from Yoga class to local cultural experiences. The scheduling is not static, and changes dynamically with local goings-on and current popular pursuits.

**1343-1, Kise, Nago-shi; tel: +81 980 43 5555;**  
**<http://www.ritzcarlton.com/Okinawa>**





## YAMAMOTO NOH THEATRE

The oldest theatre in Osaka for the art of Noh, or mask theatre, is like a capsule stuck in time. This building made in the traditional Miyadaiku method, with elaborate wooden joints more commonly found in temples and shrines, hosts special Kamigata (the region of Osaka and Kyoto) programmes, where a combination of traditional Kansai arts like Kabuki, Noh, Bunraku, and Rakugo are performed on one night

[noh-theater.com](http://noh-theater.com)

## OSAKA CASTLE

One of Japan's most iconic sites is a reconstruction of the original castle completed in the late 1500s. Its five stories built atop a stone wall and overlooking a moat give a hint of the city's splendour in the era of shoguns. Thirteen structures within the castle grounds have been named as important cultural assets by the Japanese government.

[osakacastle.net](http://osakacastle.net)



## BOATING

Playfully referred to by some locals as Venice of the East, Osaka is rife with waterways populated in bygone times by rich merchants that sailed as a way to cool off in the summer. Today, visitors can see the city on a replica of Columbus' Santa Maria, on an Aqua Bus, on a duck tour, or even on a stand-up paddle board. Search "Aqua Metropolis Osaka" online for more information.



## KISHIWADA DAIJIRI MATSURI

Spread between two events in September and October in the streets of Kishiwada, a town west of Osaka, this is described by some as Japan's most thrilling festival. Carts known as danjiri, with deities on top, are pulled by hundreds of men through the streets to the strains of drums and rallying cries. The fast turns at corners in this hair-raising spectacle add an element of danger to the proceedings (some carts inevitably topple and break).





# GLOBETROTTER SHOPPING



## SHINSAIBASHI-SUJI

With roots as a busy retail area that stretch back four centuries, during the Edo Period, Shinsaibashi-Suji is a shopping mecca. The 600-metre-long roofed arcade showcases international high-street fashion brands like Uniqlo and H&M, as well as home-grown labels like Snidel, kimono makers, jewellers, and book shops. Nearby, along the tree-lined, European-esque Midosuji road, you'll also find high-end brands like Armani, Chanel, Gucci, Prada, Rolex; the epicentre is at the intersection of the Midosuji and Nagahori-dori.

[shinsaibashi.or.jp](http://shinsaibashi.or.jp)

## UMEDA

A number of Japan's most famous department stores have headquarters and flagships in Osaka, with many centred around the Osaka Station City complex in the city's Umeda district. These include Daimaru, Hankyu, and Mitsukoshi-Isetan. And when the shopping gets too much, take the stairs to Tenku-no-noen (Sky Farm), a green space on the 11th floor of the North Gate Building where vegetables and fruits are grown, and where the fresh air, benches, tables and city views provide the perfect pick-me-up.



## SENNICHIMAE DOGUYA SUJI

Aspiring and established chefs gravitate to this destination near Namba Station, a small street that used to house antique stores but began selling kitchenwares in the 1970s. Today, the stretch of shops hawks restaurant-grade equipment, uniforms, pans, and counter after counter of the astonishingly sharp knives that enable Japanese chefs to effortlessly slice through fish and prepare heavenly sashimi.

PHOTOGRAPHS: OSAKA CONVENTION & TOURISM BUREAU



## HANADORI

Located in the Dojima Hotel, close to the Kitashinchi Station, Hanadori is one of the city's finest Japanese restaurants, with a speciality in steak. Seats include two rows facing the grill, a standard dining room, a sushi counter, and a tatami room with views into the hotel's garden. The juicy Hitachi beef from Ibaraki prefecture, northeast of Tokyo, is grilled teppanyaki style so diners get a full, unobstructed view of the sizzling action.

[dojima-hotel.com](http://dojima-hotel.com)



## HAJIME

The highest-ranked Osakan restaurant in the Asia's 50 Best Restaurants 2015 (it placed 14th), the seven-year-old Hajime is the brainchild of Hajime Yoneda, a former computer engineer turned artist and chef, who's notable for snagging the fastest Michelin three-star rating in history. It's an eclectic, hard-to-define restaurant, one influenced by gastronomy, life science, biology, brain science, gastroenterology, business management, architecture, and space, with cuisine that's French-based with Japanese accents. The signature dish called Chikyu, which translates into Planet Earth, is a gorgeously composed plate of 110 vegetables, grains, flowers, and herbs that includes marble beetroot, kinbi carrot, lablab purpureus, Madeira vine, dandelion, and red komatsuna.

[hajime-artistes.com](http://hajime-artistes.com)

## GARAGE 39

Tapping into the city's growing craft-beer trend, Garage 39 is a cool, industrial-rustic restaurant/bar with stone-lined counters and wood-plank floors. It opened in 2013, with space to seat 70 customers, and charcoal-cooked beef and pork dishes to keep diners sated. The real lure, however, is the beer selection, with 16 brews on tap, including Shiga Kogen IPA, Akashi no Kimi Weizen, and Minoh Pilsner, brewed in Osaka.

[garage39.com](http://garage39.com)



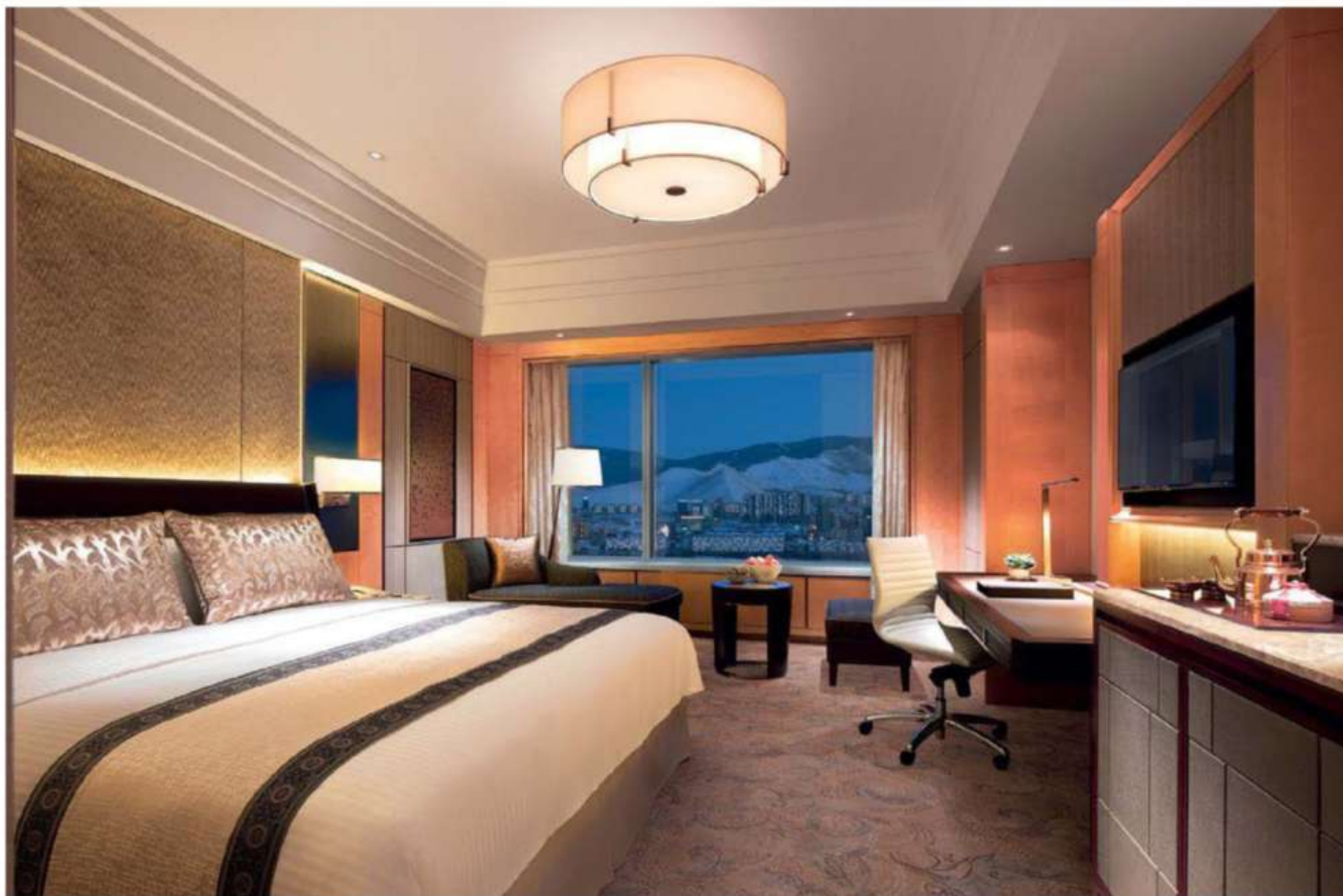
## URA NAMBA

Near the shops of Sennichimae Doguya suji, this district is a hip spot filled with a huge variety of small restaurants, from standing bars dedicated to Japanese sake, to sushi restaurants, oyster bars, and more. The ambience is lively and Ura Namba isn't widely known by the international community nor tourists – surprising since it's the place for locals to go to after work.





# GLOBETROTTER OVERNIGHT



## SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, ULAANBAATAR

Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts leads the way in the five-star hospitality arena in up and coming Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, which is experiencing a burst of social and economic development, with a bustling city centre that is busy with business and trade, and a construction boom that is seeing modern houses, apartments, condominiums and commercial buildings sprout up all over the city and beyond.

As the only premium luxury hospitality brand in the city, Shangri-La Hotel, Ulaanbaatar is playing host to an international guest list of businessmen, corporate professionals and well-heeled locals who patronise the hotel's dining establishments for meetings and social gatherings. Its Naadam Pub Bar and Grill provides a stylish venue for trendy local women to meet for cocktails and for the men to enjoy their whiskey and snooker.

Spacious and modern rooms are decorated in a soothing earthy palette and dressed up generously in light-toned marble in the bathroom. Centrally located in the city and a couple of streets away from the Government House, Great Chinggis Khaan Square, offices and embassies, the hotel is an ideal springboard to the rest of the city. Families with kids in tow will also be pleased with the location as Nayramdal Park features an amusement park with a rollercoaster, which promises hours of fun. Shopping options are also conveniently located in the city centre.

Whether it's a vacation or a business trip, a stay at Shangri-La Hotel, Ulaanbaatar will set the right tone for a memorable experience, marked by the kind of premium luxury that the well-travelled have come to expect of the brand.

[shangri-la.com/Ulaanbaatar](http://shangri-la.com/Ulaanbaatar)

WORDS: RAEWYN KOH, ESTHER FAITH LEW  
PHOTOGRAPHS: SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, ULAANBAATAR



### THE REVERIE SAIGON

One of the world's most highly anticipated hotels in Vietnam, The Reverie Saigon is set to impress with its 39 floors and 286 rooms located at the top of Times Square in Ho Chi Minh City's District 1. Grand marble finishing, tufted furniture and eye-catching art deco are just some of the Italian-inspired opulence on display in this iconic hotel.

Dine at any of the five establishments serving a variety of cuisines in restaurants accurately designed to reflect the cuisine's city of origin. For a nightcap, head to The Long @ Times Square that stretches from fashion street, Dong Khoi, to monumental boulevard, Nguyen Hue. It also serves wood-fired pizzas, Asian street food, 32 different gelato flavours and much more.

[thereveriesaigon.com](http://thereveriesaigon.com)



### MANDAPA, A RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE

Set amidst the lush jungles and majestic rice terraces of Bali's spiritual heart of Ubud, Mandapa, the third property in the prestigious Ritz-Carlton Reserve portfolio, is set to offer a sensory journey that is guaranteed to refresh the mind, body, and soul. A host of tailored lifestyle programs – including spiritual, wellness, body therapy and detox itineraries – allows guests to discover inner peace in the quiet seclusion along the Ayung River.

Inspired by indigenous Balinese villages, the center of Mandapa features a traditional rice field that showcases the deeply time-honored traditions of planting, harvesting and tending to this local culinary staple, while the grounds also feature an organic garden and farm to support education and sustainability. As part of its wellness efforts, Mandapa's restaurants also offer individually tailored health-conscious menus for wellness and detox programs, all incorporating the freshest local ingredients.

[www.mandapareserve.com](http://www.mandapareserve.com)



### NUO HOTEL BEIJING

The flagship hotel from NUO Hotels has been branded as the first true luxury hotel brand "Made in China". Its desirable zip code in Beijing's 798 Art District will serve as a landmark art destination, while the hotel's lobby, guestrooms restaurants and bars will also act as a backdrop for the curated pieces by China's most critically acclaimed artists. Done in a contemporary style with Ming Dynasty influences, the hotel's 438 guestrooms, including 55 suites, feature floor-to-ceiling glass windows overlooking the bustling city, silk-patterned walls, textured marble floors and jewel-toned accessories. Unique to NUO Hotel Beijing is the Yuan Tea House, a modern interpretation of teahouses from the Ming Dynasty. Sip on bespoke tea blends sourced from Yunnan, Anxi and Wuyi regions in the comforts of a contemporary courtyard.

[nuohotel.com](http://nuohotel.com)



# LIVE IN LOCAL HERITAGE AT SANTA GRAND HOTELS

To fully experience the local way of living, skip the hotel in the city centre and opt for one in the local neighbourhood instead. Santa Grand Hotels offers seven unique hotels located at national heritage areas, giving guests immediate access to the rich history and culture Singapore has to offer. Each hotel has been designed to reflect its neighbourhood and comes with a host of modern amenities for a comfortable stay.



## Santa Grand Bugis

The Bugis hotel features comfortable furnishings and is equipped with facilities such as a swimming pool, and café. Its strategic location places it at the centre of cultural attractions in Singapore. Within walking distance are some of the best-known places of worship, such as the Sri Krishnan Temple, Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple and the Sultan Mosque. Shopping is also convenient – visit Bugis Street for the latest fashion, Sim Lim Square for cameras and gadgets, and nearby Arab Street or Haji Lane for a mishmash of Muslim eateries and local designer brands.

## Santa Grand East Coast

Nestled in the heart of Katong, an area known for its Peranakan heritage and culture, is Santa Grand East Coast. The boutique hotel's lobby and rooms are beautifully decorated with Peranakan motifs. Facilities here include a luxurious rooftop swimming pool that overlooks the Joo Chiat area. This area is also where the iconic row of brightly coloured traditional shop houses with their original ornamented facades still stand.



## The Plot Hostels

Under the Santa Grand Hotels brand is also its affordable luxury accommodation for backpackers – The Plot Hostels. The dormitories feature four, six or eight beds with en suite bathroom with shower. Each bed also comes with two international electrical outlets for charging devices. Wi-Fi and free internet stations are available round the clock. Also available are laundry services, snacks and drinks for a small fee. Start the day right with complimentary breakfast available daily from 7am to 10.30am.

A safe stay is of utmost priority for The Plot Hostels. Rooms can only be accessed by a security wristband given to each guest and CCTV cameras have been placed around the hostel and locker area. Female guests looking for extra privacy can also opt for the ladies-only dormitories.

The hostel is located in the hipster neighbourhood of Tiong Bahru, in between Tiong Bahru and Outram Park MRT stations. Find a multitude of local cafes serving freshly brewed java and all-day brunches right next to local hawker fare in the Tiong Bahru area. Then, hop onto the train at Outram Park to transit quickly to cultural districts like Chinatown and Little India.

### Santa Grand Hotel East Coast:

Enjoy 10% off best available rate with free Wi-Fi and breakfast. Promotion inclusive of complimentary airport transfer upon departure and late check-out at 2pm (subject to room availability).

Valid till 30 June 2016.

Promo Code: SGH15LPA

**The Plot Hostels:** Enjoy 20% off best available rate with free Wi-Fi and breakfast. Valid till 30 June 2016. Promo Code: PlotPlanet20

Visit <http://www.santagrandhotels.com/> for more details.



## SRI PANWA PHUKET

With its multitude of villas dotting the landscape, Sri Panwa Phuket impresses at first sight. Nestled within lush tropical trees perched atop Cape Panwa and overlooking the glimmering sea, these earthy buildings exude enough nature and serenity to calm any visitor's soul.

Step into your private hideout and be greeted with stunning views of the surrounding islands and the Andaman Sea. Equipped with wide windows and outdoor balconies, the villas offer exquisite, uninterrupted ocean views stretching far out into the horizon. The sight is so spectacular that Beach Tomato UK has even recently awarded the establishment World's Hotel with the Best View.

Each luxurious one to five bedroom villa comes with its own infinity swimming pool to languish in and jet stream Jacuzzi system to ease tired muscles after a long day of activities. Outfitted with individual sunset pavilions and an outdoor bathing area, you can also recline on sunbeds or take a separate rain shower for the full leisure experience. Recently refurbished, the sparkling-new rooms are also decorated with elegant fittings that embrace comfort.

[www.sripanwa.com](http://www.sripanwa.com)



## G HOTEL KELAWAI

In prime location right beside the upscale malls of Penang, G Hotel provides the ultimate convenience and comfort for travellers seeking a luxurious yet affordable stay. The hotel is furnished with 208 rooms, each capturing the streetscape of Penang and features designer furnishing such as Serta world's best mattress and Herman Miller designer work chair. Basic amenities include complimentary internet broadband and Wi-Fi, non-alcoholic minibar and eco-friendly Appelles toiletries.

To cater to the different taste and preferences of guests, the hotel houses many trendy and unique food and beverages outlets. For a leisure cup of brewed aromatic coffee or casual brunch, head over to G Café for an unforgettable meal in an elegant setting. Travellers seeking to mingle and have fun can drop by the G Lounge, where it has the longest hotel bar within the island, for a cocktail or two and drink to your heart's delight.

Sports lovers will enjoy a lap or two in the picturesque rooftop infinity pool and the state-of-the-art fitness center within the hotel. Mountain bicycles are also available for rent for guests to get a full experience of exploring around Penang.

[www.ghotel.com.my](http://www.ghotel.com.my)





# Record-breaking turn out for Travel Revolution 2015

The second Travel Revolution fair this year raked in a record 81,000 visitors over three days, making it the most successful instalment to date



Following hot on the footsteps of its immensely successful first Travel Revolution fair, the second instalment saw a record number of 81,000 visitors during the three day exhibition that was held at Marina Bay Sands from 24 – 26 July. The Lonely Planet booth was abuzz with activity, as visitors competed for a stay at the luxurious The Samaya Bali; contestants guessed destinations based on images that were

flashed on a television, chalking up as many points as possible within the time limit. Those who purchased or subscribed to the magazine were allowed to spin the wheel to win a stay at Cosmopolitan Hotel and a Lonely Planet Travel Journal, plus other attractive prizes from Marshall Cavendish and hellolulu.com.sg. Participants in our photo contest got a chance to win an Eminent Camouflage luggage, courtesy of The Travel Store.

Special thanks to the following companies for their generous sponsorship:

- Cosmopolitan Hotel Hong Kong
- Samaya Bali • Lonely Planet
- The Travel Store • hellolulu.com.sg
- Marshall Cavendish



## MYANMAR'S FLAG CARRIER INTRODUCES YANGON-SINGAPORE ROUTE

Myanmar National Airlines (MNA) commenced its inaugural direct Yangon to Singapore flight route on 17 August 2015. This new route flies daily, except on Saturdays, and is serviced by the airline's latest Boeing 737-800 Next Generation jet. Through MNA's extensive domestic network, passengers will also be able to enjoy connections to 26 other domestic destinations through its hassle-free online booking system.

With its unique Mingalabar Service, passengers will get priority check-ins and boarding, as well as a fast track through immigration and security services. This service is offered complimentary to passengers flying MNA's Ruby Business Class but is also available for passengers on its Jade Premium Economy and Economy classes for an extra fee.

[flymna.com](http://flymna.com)

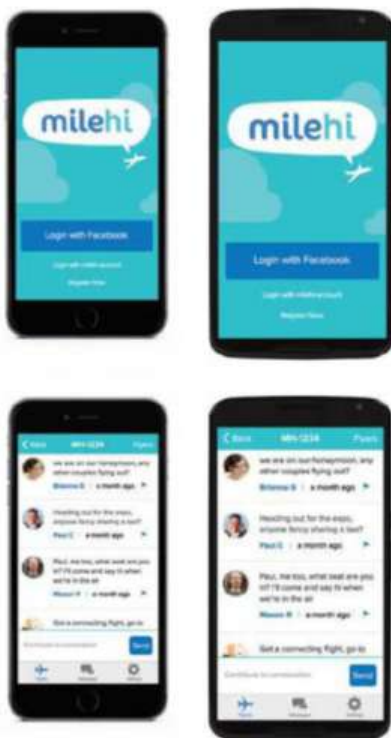


## PRE-FLIGHT NETWORKING AVAILABLE THROUGH MILEHI

Social networking has taken to the sky with the MileHi mobile app. After a quick registration process and inputting upcoming flight information, passengers of the same flight can connect with each other through the app's private messaging system any time before departure.

MileHi has cheekily been called the 'Tinder of flying' but the app has the potential for travellers to meet future business contacts and even connect with other holidayers for tips and off-the-beaten-track attractions to visit in the city they are flying to. Users are also encouraged to use the app to arrange for carpools to the airport or city centre together. The MileHi mobile app is free and available for download through the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store.

[milehi.me](http://milehi.me)



## BUILD BOATS AND BONDS AT LEGOLAND® MALAYSIA RESORT

Families with young children looking for a fun family activity need look no further. Build-A-Boat is the latest attraction offered at the Water Park at LEGOLAND® Malaysia Resort. Build-A-Boat encourages children aged four years and older to engage their motor and creative skills. The interactive activity is also perfect for families to bond over building boats or competing against one another.

The attraction houses boat hulls and more than 300,000 LEGO bricks to allow guests to build the perfect sail boat – or even cruise liner – of



their dreams. Once building is complete, guests can then race their boats down the 11m-long river. The river also has dam breaks for guests to control and change the flow of water.

[legoland.com.my](http://legoland.com.my)

## NATAS HOLIDAYS 2015 BRINGS BACK FAMILY FUN

Held at the Singapore Expo from 31 July – 2 August earlier this year, the second instalment of the National Association of Travel Agents Singapore's (NATAS) twice-yearly fair trade saw a stronger showing of smaller agencies compared to previous exhibitions. NATAS' newly appointed executive director Steven Lek also expressed greater emphasis on bringing

family fun back to these events, rather than focusing only on racking up sales numbers. The exhibition boasted carnivalesque balloons, family-friendly games, and an international food trail that featured cuisines such as fresh sushi and dim sum, while cultural performances by the Tourism Council of Bhutan and Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism also added to the festive atmosphere.

[natastravelfair.travel](http://natastravelfair.travel)



# In Our Case



## BOSS

Tailored with the outdoors in mind, the Fall/Winter 2015 Menswear collection by BOSS is a fine balance between architectural simplicity and stylish sophistication. Inspired by quintessential winter destinations the likes of Aspen and St. Moritz, expect to find quilted winter sports coats that act as elegant down jackets, a cotton-alpaca blend slim fit suit for functionality and styles, structural mouline knit fabrics in classic herringbone, and a boxy virgin wool trench coat that would go perfect with an overnight bag.

**Available at BOSS boutiques**

## LUMINOX

In addition to an alarm and split-second chrono function, the Luminox RECON Point Leader 8841KM also features a World Time City Zones Bezel with compass rose, so you always know when and where you are. Designed in collaboration with former Swiss Army Military Security NCO Andrea Micheli, the RECON Point Leader 8841KM is meant to be an efficient navigational tool for both military and civil consumers; highlights include the patented Luminox Light Technology that boasts 25 years of continuous illumination, 200 metres water resistance, and a watch strap marked with three common map scales.

**Available at leading department stores and authorised Luminox retailers**

## BANG & OLUFSEN

Experience the world's first touch-sensitive wood interface wireless music system with the BeoSound Moment. In addition to being a one-touch portal to your entire music collection (both online and offline), it also comes equipped with a new intelligent PatternPlay feature that monitors your track preferences and adapts accordingly. The multi-coloured MoodWheel, displayed on an attached aluminium interface, automatically generates playlists based on your finger's position; the closer to the centre of the wheel, the more familiar the music.

**Available at Bang & Olufsen Mandarin Gallery**

## KIKKI.K

The new Make Your Mark Collection is a collection of stationery inspired by current fashion trends and colours such as pastel neon orange and sophisticated light grey with pops of electric blue. For those getting ready to jet off for an exciting adventure, be sure to grab the A5 travel journal with pen to record down all the wonderful sights and sounds the world has to offer.

**Available at kikki.K ION Orchard**



## ATOMI

The bridge between the world and Japan, the atomi gallery curates a collection of items aimed at bringing the uncovered beauty of Japanese products to the world. This season, Ateliers Penelope bags are introduced into the store from Shibuya, Tokyo. These bags are made of durable canvas known to age and soften with use, which allows them to develop a rustic charm over time, while paraffin is incorporated into the canvas to produce a unique texture and sturdiness.

**Available at atomi Mandarin Gallery**



## SONY

Sony's newly launched Xperia M5 come packed with better camera functions and a premium waterproof design. The new model is equipped with a 21.5MP rear camera, 5x clear image zoom function and 0.25s hybrid autofocus shooting thanks to technological advancements such as phase detection AF and contrast detection AF. The phone also doubles as a powerful 'selfie cam' with its 13MP front-facing camera that can even capture high quality videos. Similar to flagship devices, Xperia M5 is waterproof and dust-tight, designed with a capless USB port for convenience.

**Available at Sony Stores and authorised dealers**



## CANON

Amateur users are able to bring their photography skills to the next level with the newly launched Speedlite430EX III-RT and Speedlite430EX III. Equipped with wireless flash shooting feature, Speedlite430EX III-RT is ideal for synchronising flash and shutter release across multiple cameras. In the case of only one camera usage, the shutter can be triggered remotely via radio transmission wireless shooting. Both models feature a new control dial and navigation menu, improving user interface and operability. A first in its series, both models will be bundled with a bounce adaptor and colour filter for advanced flash techniques, packed conveniently in a bundled carrying bag.

**Available at authorised Canon dealers from October 2015**





# Beauty Buzz



## LUNASOL 2015 AUTUMN POINT COLLECTION, FROM S\$20

Evocative of a fresh box of chocolates, the Lunasol 2015 Autumn Collection not only looks good, but smells delicious too. Taking inspiration from everyone's favourite delicacy, the collection's deep and elegant shades blend well together to create a effortlessly sophisticated look. The Duo De Chocolat Eye comes in three limited edition duos, with refreshing shades such as Pistache, Framboise, and Orange.

① Available at Lunasol counters in leading departmental stores

## LA ROCHE-POSAY ANTHELIOS XL ULTRA-LIGHT INVISIBLE MIST, S\$38.90

Devised from a hypoallergenic formula free of alcohol and parabens, the new Anthelios XL Ultra-light invisible mist from La Roche-Posay is the must have for travels this season. Protect your face from harmful UV rays with this non-greasy and lightweight sunscreen, formulated with a unique mixture of mattifying powders to improve homogenous application and give a soft powdery finish. The new sunscreen is specially formulated for sensitive skin, perfect for those prone to allergic reactions or breakouts but who still desire ample protection from the sun.

① Available at all leading pharmacies



## CRABTREE & EVELYN REFRESHING BODY MIST, S\$30

Revitalise and energise your senses with these exquisitely ultra-fine body mists. There is something customised for everyone – the citron, honey & coriander refreshing body mist for a zesty refreshment; the pomegranate, argan & grapeseed refreshing body mist for a beautifully scented treat; or the rosewater refreshing body mist for a lovely timeless floral fragrance.

① Available at Crabtree & Evelyn stores



## THE BODY SHOP ITALIAN SUMMER FIG COLLECTION, FROM S\$19.90

Created with the unique ingredients found in the sun-drenched region of Puglia in southern Italy, the new Italian Summer Fig scent promises to delight your senses and ignite wonderful memories of a journey into beauty this summer. Fragrance note includes the sweetness of succulent figs, cool crispness of the grape leaves, delicate floral element of the Tuscan Rose as well as the sensual base of warm Amber and Oakwood. The collection features various products such as shower gel and body cream.

① Available at The Body Shop stores



## SALVATORE FERRAGAMO

Newly launched for men, the Acqua Essenziale Colonia packs a burst of aquatic accords accentuated by the breeziness of bergamot, lavender, clary sage, and orange blossom. Tonka beans and Ambrox are the main ingredients in this contemporary and masculine scent that comes as an Eau de Toilette (50ml), Eau de Toilette (100ml) or Shampoo & Shower Gel (200ml).

① Available at TANGS The Plaza and TANGS Vivocity



## TONI&GUY WARDROBE DRY SHAMPOO SERIES, S\$15.90

TONI&GUY HAIR MEET WARDROBE Dry Shampoo Series is a collection of 4 dry shampoos suited to different hair needs. For those who wish to keep your hair neat and tidy throughout the day without the hassle of washing, choose the casual matt texture dry shampoo or the classic perfect tease dry shampoo for a simple yet effortlessly chic look.

① Available at Watsons Personal Care Stores



## DR LEWINN'S ETERNAL YOUTH DAY & NIGHT CREAM, S\$72.90

Celebrating Dr Laurence LeWinn's 25th anniversary, the eternal youth day & night cream is created as a luxury anti-ageing product formulated with diamond, black pearl extracts and Juvefoxo. Extracted from Turritopsis Dohrnii, an immortal jellyfish, Juvefoxo has the ability to rewind the ageing process, while vitamin A and Patch20 provide intense moisturisation. Sufficiently lightweight for day time yet highly nourishing for overnight use, this is the only product you will need for younger looking skin.

① Available at Watsons Personal Care stores





# SWISS-ARMY STOWING

**“To bring along or leave behind?” is a question one need never have to ask again with the Victorinox Werks Traveler™ 5.0 luggage**



Inspired by the ingenuity and multi-functionality of the Original Swiss Army Knife, the Werks Traveler™ 5.0 utilises an intelligent Pack More System that provides five packing solutions in more than 32 possible packing configurations. For corporate travellers, make use of the removable suiter to keep suits wrinkle free. The zippered expansion enlarges packing space, while the Pack More divider helps you compartmentalise shoes and dirty laundry away from clean clothes. Prevent precious cargo from shifting around with the X-shaped compression straps. For additional carry-ons, keep them secured to the luggage with the removable attach-a-bag strap that holds up to 13.6kg.

Secure belongings with the Travel Sentry Approved (TSA) combination lock that allows US airport security to open up bags without destroying the lock during inspections. For additional peace of mind, travellers can also register their lock combinations on [Victorinox.com](http://Victorinox.com) for quick recovery if it is ever forgotten.

Transporting the Werks Traveler™ 5.0 is a breeze with its dual-caster wheels that allows for 360° movement with zero weight-in-hand. The Ribbed, Geluxe™ Comfort Grip also dampens vibrations for a smooth glide across multiple terrains. The adjustable, one-touch, dual-trolley aluminium handle system locks in three different positions to accommodate travellers of various heights for a comfortable pull through any airport, hotel, city and more.

Available in Black and Navy Blue, the Victorinox Werks Traveler™ 5.0 is designed to help you pack more while weighing less, so you can make more space for the things you need, the things you like, and everything else in between.





# Easy Trips



- ▶ Place your bets at the world's richest horse race in Melbourne, Australia
- ▶ Light up the streets to celebrate Buddha's return in Yangon, Myanmar
- ▶ Eat, drink and be merry at "it!" Festival in Bay of Islands, New Zealand
- ▶ Catch a glimpse of the biggest Buddhist festival in Thimphu, Bhutan
- ▶ Greet autumn with a celebratory parade in Nagasaki, Japan

WORDS: RAEWYN KOH PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES





**1** Close to AUS\$10 million in monetary prizes will be given out to winners



A host of international champions contend to take home the grand prize



Look out for spectators decked out in their finest

## Melbourne, Australia

### WHY GO NOW?

The world's richest racing event, the Melbourne Cup Carnival, is a 120-year-old institution of four horse races that attracts more than 325,000 racegoers to Flemington each year.

The Cup is not just for fans of horse racing but for fashion as well. A cardinal element of the Cup is the prestigious Myer Fashions on the Field. Each year, women and men dress to the nines as they vie for a monetary prize of AUS\$400,000 and a spot in Melbourne's social pages.

Central to the Cup is, of course, the racing. The Cup opens with the AAMI Victoria Derby Day, followed by the most anticipated race of the event — the 3,200m-long Emirates Melbourne

Cup that has a grand prize of AUS\$6.2 million and a trophy worth AUS\$175,000 made of 2,340g of solid 18ct gold. Next comes Crown Oaks Day where the winner of the Myer Fashions on the Field is announced. The Cup concludes on 7 November with Emirates Stakes Day, which is headlined by the AUS\$1 million Group 1 Emirates Stake 1,600m event and the 1,200m Darley Classic, a leg of the Global Sprint Challenge.

Prepare for your own fashion parade by first visiting one of the top milliners in Melbourne, Melissa Jackson, in Fitzroy, the hipster district. Pair avant-garde headgear with statement haute couture jewellery pieces from Collins Street.

### HOW DO I MAKE IT HAPPEN?

✦ The 2015 Melbourne Cup Carnival runs from 31 October to 7 November. Individual event tickets can be bought at [flemington.com.au/melbourne-cup-carnival](http://flemington.com.au/melbourne-cup-carnival).

✎ Qantas Airways flies direct from Singapore and Kuala Lumpur to Melbourne.

✎ The Melbourne Cup Carnival

draws in large, international and domestic crowds and it is advisable to book accommodation early. Mercure North Melbourne is located not far from Flemington Racecourse and is also situated less than 5 minutes from the CBD and many other attractions (from US\$170; [mercurenorthmelbourne.com.au](http://mercurenorthmelbourne.com.au)).



## Yangon, Myanmar

### WHY GO NOW?

One of Myanmar's most important festivals after Thingyan (New Year Water Festival) happens during the full moon period in October. The Thadingyut Festival is a celebration of the return of Buddha from heaven where he had preached to his deceased mother. It is said that during Buddha's descent, people all over the country lit candles to welcome him back and it is why the streets of Yangon are illuminated by the flickering flames from candles during the three-day festival. The candles are earthen saucers filled with sesame oil uses cotton thread as wicks.

During the festival, the young pay respect to their elders by asking for forgiveness and presenting them with *longyi* (gifts of food). The elders, in return, offer blessings for the future. The community also gathers to collect donations for charity

and for decorations of the festival.

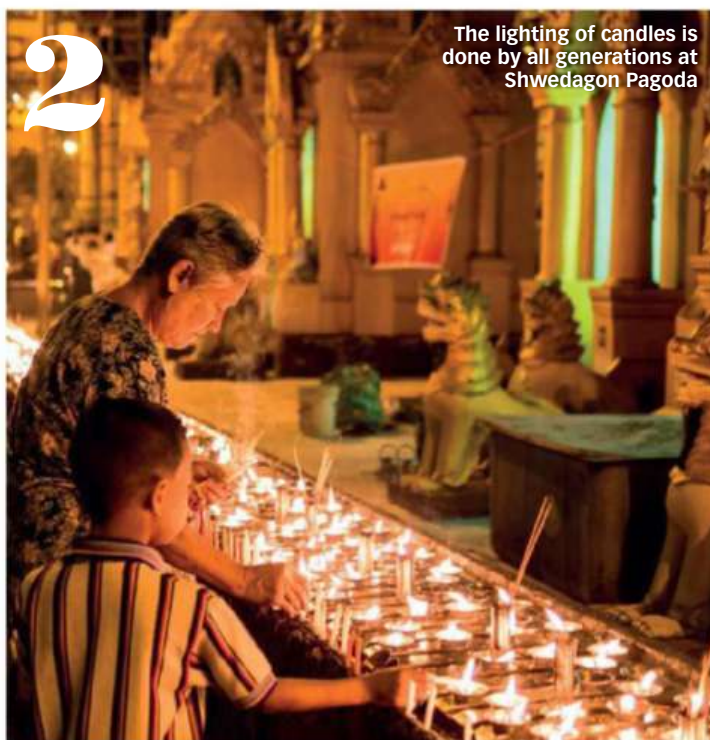
On the day of the full moon, join in with the Buddhists to visit pagodas and monasteries to offer alms and joss sticks to the monks. Celebrations continue on the streets; various stalls are set up and sell traditional Myanmar food, toys and kitchen utensils. Every city will also have *Zat Pwes*, Myanmar traditional theatre that is performed for the crowds.

### HOW DO I MAKE IT HAPPEN?

✦ The Thadingyut Festival takes place from 26 to 28 October this year.

① Travel with Myanmar National Airlines' new direct flight from Singapore to Myanmar. AirAsia and Malaysia Airlines also fly direct from Kuala Lumpur.

🏠 Stay at Belmond Governor's Residence, a 49-room luxurious colonial-style residence that is just 5 minutes from Shwedagon Pagoda, one of the main pagodas where Buddhists go during Thadingyut (from US\$450; [belmond.com/governors-residence-yangon](http://belmond.com/governors-residence-yangon)).



The lighting of candles is done by all generations at Shwedagon Pagoda



Eat, drink and dance your way to festive fun in the sun

## Bay of Islands, New Zealand

### WHY GO NOW?

Love it, cook it, drink it, bite it, sing it! This is "it!" — a boutique festival, now in its sixth year, that celebrates food, wine and entertainment in New Zealand's Bay of Islands.

Savour mouth-watering food from local restaurants and farmers, such as succulent oysters from Ben's Oysters and award-winning seafood chowder from Marina Café. Toast to life with indulgent glasses of wines from Cottle Hill Vineyard or if you'd prefer a frosty, Montheith's has you covered with their crafted fine beers.

This family friendly festival has a dedicated children's area with a face painter, magician and bouncy castle to keep little ones occupied. For the older ones, participate in kina sucking, oyster shucking and eating, and pie-eating competitions. Throughout the day, The Black Seeds, a local musical group, will keep everyone in an upbeat mood with their fusion of dub and funk.

After the festival, visit Williams Road, which is just next

to the festival grounds, for shopping and bar hopping. The Bay of Islands also has plenty to do: swim with dolphins with Dolphin Cruises' Dolphin Eco Experience that includes a cruise around the bay. Book now at [dolphincruises.co.nz](http://dolphincruises.co.nz).

### HOW DO I MAKE IT HAPPEN?

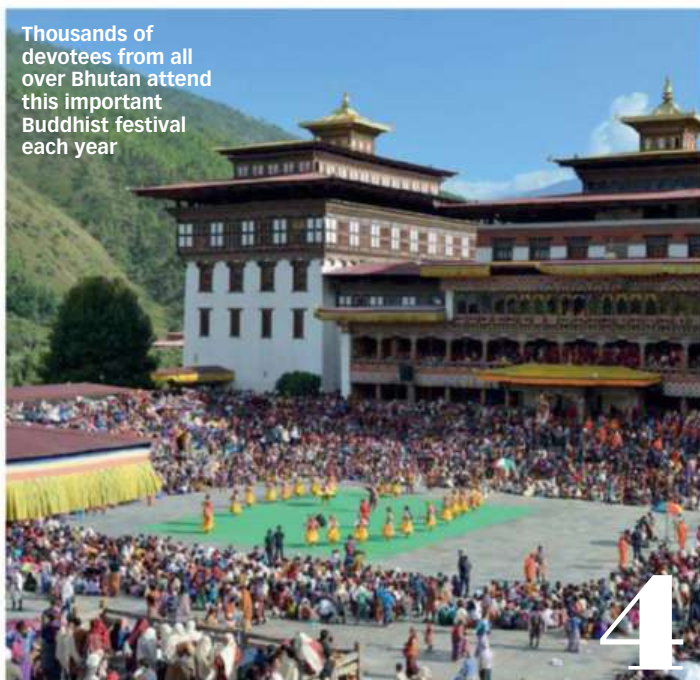
✦ This year's "it!" Festival takes place on 24 October from 11am to 6pm. Tickets are available at [paihianz.co.nz/it\\_festival](http://paihianz.co.nz/it_festival).

① Fly on Air New Zealand from Singapore and Kuala Lumpur to Kerikeri Airport in Bay of Islands with a layover in Auckland. From Kerikeri, take the Super Shuttle for a direct transfer to Paihia (from US\$18 per way; [supershuttle.co.nz](http://supershuttle.co.nz)).

🏠 The Waterfront Suites Paihia is just down the road from the "it!" Festival and faces the Te Ti Bay. The 1, 2 or 3-bedroom suites are modern apartments that include a fully equipped kitchen with microwave, oven and refrigerator available (from US\$262; [thewaterfrontpaihia.co.nz](http://thewaterfrontpaihia.co.nz)).



Thousands of devotees from all over Bhutan attend this important Buddhist festival each year



## Thimphu, Bhutan

### WHY GO NOW?

The Land of the Thunder Dragon, also the happiest country in the world, celebrates in style at one of the country's biggest festivals. Thimphu Tshechu, held in the capital city of Bhutan, is a three-day long festival that begins on the 10th day of the eighth lunar month. The festival honours Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rinpoche, who is credited as having introduced Tantric Buddhism to the Himalayas.

Before the Tshechu, monks pray for days and nights and participate in rituals to invoke the gods. Thousands of people also travel from neighbouring Dzongkhags (districts) to attend the Tshechu. The main festivities happen at the courtyard of Tashichhodzong, where monks in colourful brocade attire perform various dances using masks. In addition, the Atsaras (court jesters) dance and jest to prevent evil forces from causing harm during Tshechus. In between the dancing are chants and readings of Buddhist scripts. Follow the culmination of the

festival by heading to Buddha Point to visit the 169ft tall bronze statue of Buddha Dordenma. Enjoy the panoramic view of the Thimphu valley from this vantage point.

### HOW DO I MAKE IT HAPPEN?

✦ Thimphu Tshechu will be held from 23 to 25 September this year.

① Travellers will have to make their way from Singapore or Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok. From here, take a 3-hour flight on Bhutan Airlines to Paro International Airport. Hire a driver at the airport to make your way to Thimphu.

✈ Visas are required by travellers who are not citizens of any of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation countries. These can be obtained by booking an itinerary through a trusted tour agency. Druk Asia offers a 7-day Thimphu Tshechu tour around Thimphu and its neighbouring cities. The agency also takes care of visas, flights and accommodation (from US\$1540; [drukasia.com](http://drukasia.com)).

## Nagasaki, Japan

### WHY GO NOW?

Autumn has been welcomed in Nagasaki by the Nagasaki Kunchi Festival for more than 370 years and is one of the three great festivals in Japan. The festival is highlighted by the Hono-Odori where towns (Odori-cho) take charge once every seven years to perform at Suwa Shrine, Otabisho, Yasaka Shrine and Kokaïdo. There are 59 separate Odori-cho and each will perform their own unique dance while wearing traditional garb.

Most notable during the three festival days are the floats shaped like boats on wheels that are elaborately decorated. These floats parade through the streets to the cheers of spectators.

As with every Japanese festival, food is quintessential. Street food ranges from the traditional, like okonomiyaki, to the more modern chocolate-covered bananas. There are also other vendors that sell goods indigenous to the prefecture all around.

After the festivities, explore the rich history of Nagasaki. The prefecture has become an emblem for world peace

after the atomic bombing in 1945. Visit the Nagasaki Peace Park for a contemplative walk and then move on to the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum for a sobering exhibition.

### HOW DO I MAKE IT HAPPEN?

✦ Nagasaki Kunchi Festival occurs annually from 7 to 9 October. The four main performances are ticketed and near-impossible for foreigners to obtain seats but it is possible to get glimpses of the parade near Nagasaki Station — go early to reserve standing space. Festival schedules are readily available at tourist information counters and at hotels.

① All Nippon Airlines and Japan Airlines will fly to Nagasaki from Singapore and Kuala Lumpur with one layover at Narita Airport in Tokyo.

✈ Hotels near the main performance venues and Nagasaki Station are snapped up quickly. Consider staying in a traditional ryokan instead. Japanese Guest Houses has a convenient list of these Edo period inns available (from US\$125; [japaneseguesthouses.com](http://japaneseguesthouses.com)).



The Nagasaki Kunchi Festival incorporates different aspects of Chinese and Dutch cultures

PHOTOGRAPHS: WIKIMEDIA/CHRISTOPHER J. FLYNN, NAGASAKI CITY HALL





# WHAT IS THE SINGLE MOST AMAZING SIGHT IN THE WORLD?


*The Taj Mahal? The Grand Canyon? Stonehenge?*


*For the first time, Lonely Planet's travel experts have the answer.  
We've ranked the best mega-sights and hidden gems in a definitive  
wish list of the 500 best places to visit on earth.*

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# THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD

Welcome to the world's biggest movie set. California's epic terrain has featured in countless films – hit the road to find the scene-stealing landscapes that have helped Hollywood take on the world

WORDS CHRISTA LARWOOD ● PHOTOGRAPHS MARK READ

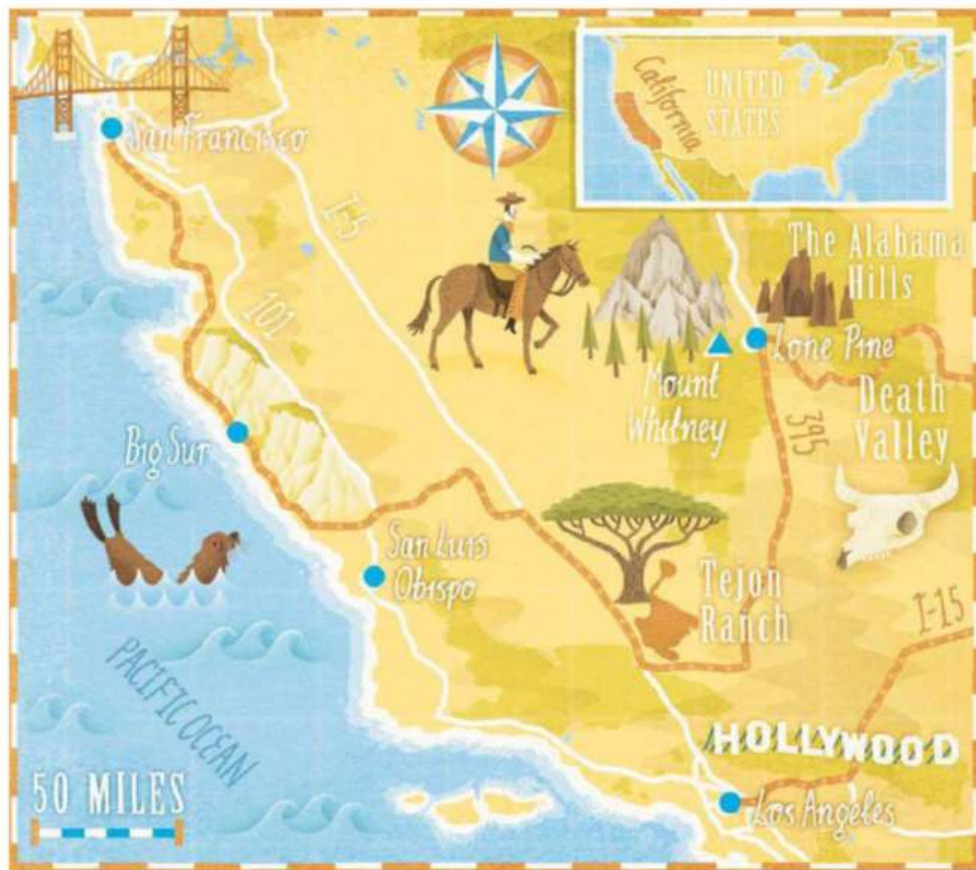






The open plains of  
Death Valley stretching  
to the horizon





**S**WATHES OF DENSE SEA-FOG wrap around the Golden Gate Bridge, concealing and revealing the city of San Francisco like a colossal Dance of the Seven Veils. In the distance, the hunched, brooding form of Alcatraz Island slowly emerges, then the jagged skyline of Downtown and, gradually, the pale cylinder of Coit Tower and Pier 39, with its busy docks and colourful boardwalk. The city has appeared like a mirage, its hills all bathed in a soft, golden light. Minutes later, it is gone again.

When Alfred Hitchcock arrived in San Francisco in 1951, he declared that it was the perfect place for a murder mystery and, captivated by its moody, capricious weather and striking setting, he shot his classic *Vertigo* here. He wasn't alone in seeing the city's silver screen potential. This place has been captured from every angle by filmmakers from Golden Age impresario Cecil B DeMille to Francis Ford Coppola.

A morning wander reveals the impossibly steep streets where Steve McQueen's green '68 Mustang streamed

MAP ILLUSTRATION: STUART KOLAKOVIC





through the air in *Bullitt*'s spectacular car chase, and the sky-scraping Financial District where *The Towering Inferno* blazed. At the docks, where dozens of sea lions clamber to doze in soft brown piles, the lonely island known locally as The Rock can be seen, from which Clint Eastwood made his *Escape from Alcatraz*. Stretching north is the Golden Gate Bridge itself, saved from disaster by the heroics of Superman, James Bond and the X-Men, to name just a few.

'More than a thousand movies have been filmed in this town. And San Francisco is so distinctive, with its landscape and architecture – not to mention that big, beautiful bridge – that the city itself becomes a central character,' says Susan Hosking-Ramos. She holds up one hand to protect her eyes from the sun as she strolls through the grounds of Lucasfilm, the digital effects headquarters of *Star Wars* creator George Lucas – who is himself a local lad made good.

Susan is currently working to establish San Francisco's first film museum, and she often comes here for inspiration. Others come to pay homage, posing with imaginary

light sabres next to a fountain crowned with a bronze statue of Yoda, *Star Wars*' diminutive, green-skinned Jedi master.

Susan talks of the early 20th century, when San Francisco was the leading light of California's movie industry, and the likes of Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Rudolph Valentino came here to make it big. 'Then, between 1910 and 1920, a lot of the industry moved down to LA. We were robbed!' she says with a wry grin. 'But San Francisco has remained important. Directors like Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas come here to make movies that are outside the Hollywood studio system. They get called Fog City Mavericks because they don't want to be told what to do. They want the freedom of expression that drew them to making films in the first place. And in that way, they are representative of the values of San Francisco.'

She makes a gesture with her hand that seems to take in the whole city, with its history of beatnik poets, free love and gay rights, now clear and present under a perfect blue sky. 'This is a place where you come to be yourself.'



San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, a veteran star of the silver screen.  
ABOVE Film expert Susan Hosking-Ramos, under Jedi master Yoda's watchful eye







The dramatic, rocky coast of Big Sur.  
ABOVE FROM LEFT  
Location scout Sean  
O'Brien knows every  
corner of California;  
hitting the open road

**C**ALIFORNIA IS THE undisputed movie-making centre of the world. Although India may produce more films and China has bigger studios, the industry based in this sprawling US state has an unmatched influence that reaches across the globe. Even the name 'Hollywood' has become so synonymous with films and film-making, it's spurred copycat nicknames from Bollywood in Mumbai – which was once known as Bombay – and Nollywood in Nigeria to Wollywood in Wellington, New Zealand, and Lollywood, in the Pakistani city of Lahore.

So why did it all happen here? California wasn't a leading contender around the turn of the 20th century – that honour belonged to Chicago and New York, where America's first commercial films were made. Yet the west coast's sunny weather was a big draw at a time when even indoor scenes were filmed in the open air to save on lighting costs. It was also blessedly far from the reach of east-coast patent holders such as Thomas Edison, who would defend his camera technology with legal challenges and, if the mood took him, with hired goons wielding baseball bats.

The other reason for California's movie supremacy becomes clear on the journey south from San Francisco. The modern freeways and suburban sprawl give way to high grasslands in the Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve and dense redwood forests north of Santa Cruz. The Pacific Coast Highway stretches out ahead, tracing rocky headlands and gentle sandy bays. At Big Sur, it climbs up the rough volcanic ranges, carving around cliffs with sheer drops to the thrashing ocean below, and leads on to the silver-grey foreshores of San Simeon, where elephant seals plop and loll, wriggling to inch themselves up the sand as the frothing tide approaches.

'What makes California the premier place to shoot is the variety of landscapes,' says

location scout Sean O'Brien. He lives in Los Angeles, but travels across the country and the world seeking the perfect settings for films, television and advertisements.

Settled comfortably in the leather-look booth of a roadside diner, he orders a cup of coffee and explains the secrets of his craft.

'You can be shooting a scene at the beach here in the morning, in the mountains doing a snow shot that same afternoon, then you can head down to the desert, all in one day. It's that fast. Salt flats, sand dunes, cities, suburban zones, industrial areas, farms – whatever you need. Nowhere else has diverse topography like this.'

In the early days, when filming abroad was often too expensive to contemplate, movie studios in California were able to tell stories set around the world using landscapes found conveniently on their doorsteps. In 1929, Paramount Pictures produced a map promoting these natural features as 'the world in one state', and some of the biggest films in history feature California as a scenic stand-in. *The Ten Commandments* saw a grey-bearded and bewigged Charlton Heston parting the Red Sea of Egypt to the south of Big Sur, near Santa Barbara. Shirley Temple's Heidi skipped over the 'Swiss Alps' in the San Bernadino Forest to the west of Lost Angeles, and the trenches of northern France were recreated in Orange County for *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Even US locations did not escape substitution: the production of *Gone With The Wind* didn't set foot in Georgia, where Scarlett O'Hara's beloved Tara was supposedly located.

'It still happens today, most definitely,' Sean says, running a finger across Paramount's 1929 map. 'If you can't film internationally, I think you can cheat anywhere in California: Afghanistan, the South of France, Tuscany. Even the snowy Siberian tundra, out on the salt flats. It's all white!' He laughs, flashing a grin. 'This is Hollywood – you can make it happen.'



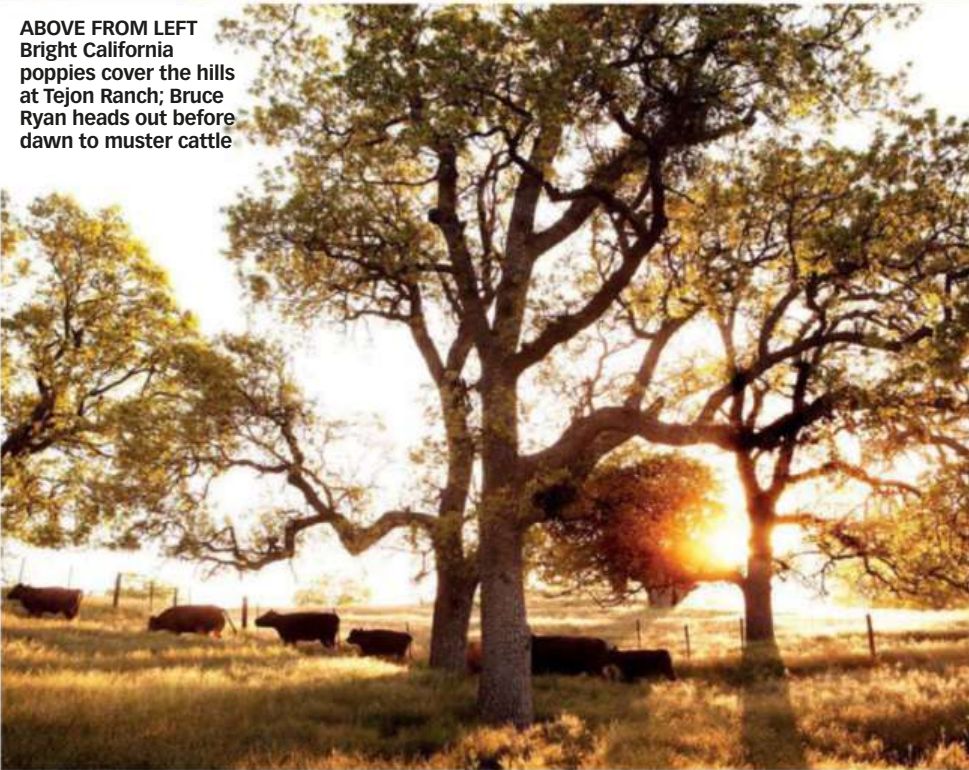


*'What makes California the premier place to shoot is the variety of landscapes. Whether it's coastline, salt flats, sand dunes, cities: nowhere else has diverse topography like this'*





ABOVE FROM LEFT  
Bright California  
poppies cover the hills  
at Tejon Ranch; Bruce  
Ryan heads out before  
dawn to muster cattle



Crowded with curious-  
looking, rounded  
boulders, the Alabama  
Hills provide the  
archetypal Wild West  
setting. OPPOSITE  
FROM LEFT Harold  
Greenberg props up  
the bar; Wild West  
décor at Jake's Saloon;  
Kerry Powell heads for  
the hills; the bright  
lights of Lone Pine





**A**T DAWN THE NEXT DAY, around 150 miles inland, Bruce Ryan pulls on his black Stetson hat and heads out into a dew-soaked morning. Around him, soft green hills stretch to the horizon, descending into cool glades crowded with broad-trunked, 400-year-old oak trees. With skills practised over the course of almost four decades here, he manoeuvres his horse to round up a group of recalcitrant, russet-coloured calves, heading off their meanderings with an authoritative click of his tongue. Above him, the moon persists in the sky despite the growing sunlight, making a silhouette of a golden eagle as it bobs up and down, riding warm currents in the air.

Bruce's round-up takes place in a tiny corner of Tejon Ranch, a huge conserved property of around 240,000 acres stretching from the fertile farmlands of the San Joaquin Valley over the ridge of the Sierra Nevada to the edge of the Mojave Desert. It's an area of rare biodiversity that has scientists swarming, with a number of endangered species and landscapes ranging from this rolling oak savannah to alpine forests, cactus groves and desert grasslands.

This geographical crossroads is a perfect microcosm of California's natural landscapes, so it's perhaps not surprising that Hollywood is a regular visitor here. One part of the ranch has been specifically designed for directors looking to 'cheat' Africa, with a huge single oak tree clipped into the shape of an acacia. It's not always an effective ruse: today, the wildflowers are out in force, with spills of purple lupine and bright orange California poppies spreading across the plains, rather ruining the illusion. In the summer, however, the tree's careful topiary against a backdrop of bleached grass gives an unmistakable African look – especially when elephants and zebras are brought in, as happened when scenes from the latest *Transformers* movie were shot here in 2010.

From this traditional ranching land, the road follows the Sierra Nevada Mountains northeast through the baking Mojave Desert to a place where no ranching actually takes place, yet the most famous cowboys of them all have come here to strut their stuff.

The Lone Ranger, John Wayne, Roy Rogers and Clint Eastwood have all slung guns, rescued little ladies and ridden off

into the sunset in the Alabama Hills. These odd, weather-rounded granite formations, huddled between the tiny town of Lone Pine and the snow-dusted peak of Mount Whitney, have played host to more than 400 films and television shows – mostly Westerns. So ubiquitous was this setting for cowboy movies in the '40s and '50s, that this tiny area has become the definitive Wild West landscape, representing New Mexico, Arizona and the untamed reaches of California itself.

Today, several fans of *Rawhide* – the 1960s Western television series – have arrived from out of town and are gingerly picking their way on horseback among the rust-coloured rocks. One of the group, a man with a silver ponytail trailing down his back, points out the sites of famous scenes from the programme in hushed tones of profound reverence.

According to Kerry Powell, a local resident and founder of the annual Lone Pine Film Festival, fans who come here usually make a bit more noise, playing action-packed games of cowboys and Indians – sometimes in full costume and face paint.

*'Local kids would watch the biggest stars of the day, like Humphrey Bogart and Cary Grant, riding the grassy plains and waging battle in exciting canyon shoot-outs'*



At 74, Kerry negotiates the boulders a little gingerly, but she knows her way around these rocks. As a kid, she would sneak up to where the movies were being filmed and watch the biggest stars of the day, like Humphrey Bogart and Cary Grant, riding the grassy plains and waging battle in exciting canyon shoot-outs.

Despite the instantly familiar Western terrain, Hollywood has also used these hills as a stand-in for places such as Mexico and Afghanistan and the odd, barren landscapes of alien planets. 'My favourite was when they filmed the Indian classic *Gunga Din* here,' Kerry remarks. 'We were so thrilled as kids to see those elephants running all over our hills.'

Though directors still like to shoot on this classic terrain – Quentin Tarantino was in town last month – the filming frenzy here died down as the popularity of Westerns waned through the 1960s. Locals of a certain age, however, all have a story of when their little town became an outpost of Hollywood – and the rocks have continued to hold their appeal. According to 62-year-old Lovella from the Lone Pine Rock and Gift Shop, the area was just as popular as the kids grew older, when they would hide among the rocks at night and party. 'You could see the cop cars coming from a long way away,' she says with a solemn wink.

**O**N A FLAT-TOPPED HILL overlooking the sprawling city of Los Angeles, around 120 miles south of the Alabama Hills, the grass has been worn bare by thousands of eager feet. A constant stream of visitors tramp up to this point and make pouting, starlet poses for the camera, lining themselves up with a set of rather plain and higgledy letters that rise behind them on the slopes of Mount Lee – the world-famous Hollywood Sign. These 14m-high letters were originally erected as 'Hollywoodland', an advertisement for a housing development, with no connection to the movie business at all. However, partly due to the restoration efforts of, oddly enough, Playboy founder Hugh Hefner – the sign has come to be a central part of this town's showbiz mythology.

The mere names of the streets are enough to conjure glamorous celluloid images: Rodeo Drive, Sunset Boulevard, Mulholland Drive. Then there are the slick restaurants jammed with lunching execs in designer shades, sprawling studios with serious-looking security guards, and gangs of paparazzi lying in wait outside hotels and boutiques. On Hollywood Boulevard, visitors kneel




The famous sign on Mount Lee is a global symbol of the Los Angeles movie industry.

**LEFT** Up-and-coming actress Kestrin Pantera on the rooftop of the Roosevelt Hotel

down to squash their hands into the cement imprints left by stars of Hollywood's Golden Age – and the cast of the *Harry Potter* movies – while the floor of the nearby shopping hub, the Hollywood & Highland Center, is paved with starry-eyed success stories. The message is clear: you too can be a star. Once they've read the inspirational quotes, tired shoppers can rest on a conveniently provided casting director's couch. 'LA is so saturated with people who are engaged in filmmaking and television, it's hard to go about your normal life here without getting bopped across the head with it,' says Kestrin Pantera, settling into a poolside chair at the plush Roosevelt Hotel. Like many hopefuls who come here to follow their destiny, Kestrin arrived in LA eight years ago to pursue her acting career. She has already achieved some success, having appearing in several independent films and commercials.

'I don't think I would have chosen to move to LA if I hadn't wanted to pursue a career in the entertainment industry,' she says. 'But people are constantly asking you: "Why don't you move to LA?" It's like it's ingrained in our cultural DNA.'

She pauses, then laughs and admits: 'I'm originally from the San Francisco Bay area, so I have a natural aversion to Los Angeles. It's just that there are few other places where you can be walking along the street, be spotted by an agent or manager, and then suddenly you've made it. You don't know when it's going to happen, you don't know what you need to do, it just somehow chooses you. It's confusing and mythic, but it happens here. that's hollywood.' 





*'A constant stream of visitors tramp up and make pouting,  
starlet poses for the camera'*





## essentials



## i GETTING THERE

Singapore Airlines and Emirates fly to San Francisco airport from both Singapore and Kuala Lumpur (from US\$1,275; singaporeair.com).

## GETTING AROUND

California was made for road trips, so a private car is the best option. Car rental from San Francisco airport starts at around US\$94 for one-day hire and US\$39 per day for seven-day rental (avis.co.uk).

## FURTHER READING

See Lonely Planet's California's Best Trips guide (US\$24.99) and visitcalifornia.co.uk for more help in planning your journey.



## THE FINAL WORD

'If everybody in the USA,  
Could come with us to  
Californ-i-a, We could take  
'em to a place out west,  
Where the good sun shines  
every day...'

**The Beach Boys,  
California Calling**

## THREE OF THE BEST... CALIFORNIAN NATIONAL PARKS



## REDWOOD PARKS

The Redwood National and State Parks on California's north coast comprise four adjoining parks, all famous for their forests of astonishing redwood trees (above). These can measure up to nine metres across, exceed 1,000 years in age and reach heights of up to 110 metres. Three grand rivers have carved deep gorges through the mountains here, and from the Klamath River Overlook, you can watch for grey whales out in the Pacific Ocean. Head inland to spot Roosevelt elk on the prairie. The redwood parks are six hours' drive north of San Francisco (nps.gov/redw).

**STAY** The Historic Requa Inn is a comfortable b&b conveniently located in the middle of Redwood National Park (from US\$110; requainn.com).



## DEATH VALLEY

On the edge of the Mojave Desert, Death Valley National Park is a striking expanse of mountains, sand dunes and salt flats, scattered with ghost towns and gold mines (above). The ominous name was coined to warn off westbound pioneers tempted to take a shortcut across the desert plains – and rightly so, as temperatures in the region have been recorded at a blistering 56.7°C – but the area is full of wildlife, from desert bighorn sheep to horned lizards on the sandy floor. Death Valley is a five-hour journey by car from Los Angeles (nps.gov/deva).

**STAY** Sleep at the Furnace Creek Resort, a historic adobe lodging providing an oasis of date palm trees and a pool overlooking the desert (from US\$173; furnacecreekresort.com).



## LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK

The land steams and rumbles in northeastern California's Lassen Volcanic National Park. In the shadow of 3,189-metre-high Lassen Peak (above) – a 'plug dome volcano' formed from lava – are jagged craters, hot springs, belching sulphur vents and boiling pots of mud. It's not all lava and brimstone, however – there are also mountain lakes and forests, rushing streams and hillsides that bloom with colourful wildflowers in the spring. Lassen Volcanic National Park is four hours' drive north from San Francisco (nps.gov/lavo).

**STAY** The Grace Lake Resort is situated at the base of Mount Lassen, with cosy cabins set among the trees (from US\$118; gracelakeresort.com).

The magnificent  
Bixby Bridge is one  
of the most scenic  
points on the  
Pacific Coast  
Highway





# Great Escape

## PROVENCE

Even this enduringly popular region has its hidden sides – parasol-free beaches in the recesses of Mediterranean fjords, a painter’s source of inspiration among untouched mountain scenery, a watery wilderness roamed by cowboys, and secret corners sprung back to life in France’s most ancient city

WORDS DUNCAN CRAIG ● PHOTOGRAPHS MATT MUNRO

Marseille’s  
Endoume quarter





# Plan your trip

**1** Explore headlands and peaceful inlets along the majestic coastal stretch of **Les Calanques** (p52)

**2** Head to timeless, vineyard-draped **Dentelles de Montmirail** to uncover centuries of wine production (p54)

**3** Experience the untamed nature of the mountainous **Alpilles**, a region that inspired Van Gogh (p56)

**4** Visit the laid-back **Camargue** to see 'gardians' rounding up bulls on the region's famed white horses (p58)

**5** Climb narrow streets to soak up the ambiance and creative energy of the rejuvenated old town of **Marseille** (p60)



MAP ILLUSTRATION: ALEX VERHILLE. PHOTOGRAPHS: WIM LANCLUS/ALAMY, MATT MUNRO, ZUMA PRESS INC/ALAMY





## HOW TO GET THERE

Marseille's airport is 15 miles north of the city. British Airways, Lufthansa, and Air France fly there from Singapore (from US\$1,138; britishairways.com), while Air France flies there from Kuala Lumpur (from US\$860; airfrance.com).

## HOW TO GET AROUND

A car is essential for four of the five spots covered in this Great Escape; in hectic Marseille, offload it fast (there are good underground car parks in the revamped port just down the hill from Le Panier). All the major car-hire companies have outlets at Marseille airport; consider an advance booking in the busier months (from US\$55 per day; europcar.com). Have plenty of loose change ready for the péages, or tolls, on the major autoroutes, and keep your wits about you when driving in smaller villages, where passengers may feel the need to breathe in to access some of the narrower lanes.

## HOW LONG TO SPEND

Like a quality Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Provence is not to be rushed. Life here often seems to be squeezed in around meals rather than vice versa. Given the short flight and transfer times, a 10-night break will guarantee you the best part of two full days and nights in each location. With an extra day or two, consider reversing the order and ending with an extended period in and around Les Calanques and the charming port of Cassis.

## WHAT TO BUDGET

As is often the case in Provence, much comes down to food. You'll eat very well – and cheaply – sourcing from bakeries and the ubiquitous town and village markets. But if you want to indulge in at least one haute-cuisine blowout, you'll need to factor in US\$125 or more a head for dinner at a celebrated restaurant such as double-Michelin-starred L'Atelier in Arles (rabanel.com) or Restaurant Pierre Reboul in Aix-en-Provence (restaurant-pierre-reboul.com). On the plus side,

accommodation does not command quite the premium it does further east along the ritzier Côte d'Azur. Rooms in a good-quality rustic hotel can be picked up for around US\$125, while chambres d'hôtes – or b&bs – offer additional savings.

## WHEN TO GO

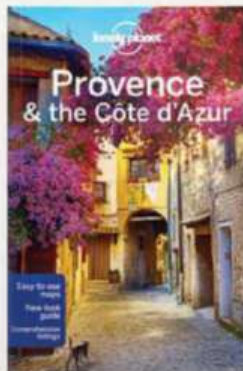
The mild climate makes Provence a pleasure much of the year. July and August can be extremely busy, with coastal roads and hilltop towns prone to congestion. The shoulder seasons, beginning in April and extending deep into October, are a particular joy, whether for the spring flowers of May, the flowering of the region's signature lavender in June, or the autumn light and still-mild air and sea temperatures of September and October.

## WHO CAN HELP

Hotels, flights and hire car can all be booked independently with limited hassle. Plenty of operators, such as Discover Provence, offer tours to the region, many focusing on special interests such as wine, hiking, birdwatching, cycling or horseriding (discover-provence.net).

## HOW TO PLAN

See Lonely Planet's Provence & the Côte d'Azur (US\$21.99), and the official sites for the two départements featured here, Vaucluse Tourism (provenceguide.co.uk) and Bouches-du-Rhône (visitprovence.com). For an overview, visit uk.rendezvousenfrance.com.



# ON THE ROAD

## Nibble

Navettes, the orange-blossom-flavoured biscuits shaped like rowing boats to commemorate the means by which one of Jesus's followers, Mary Magdalene, is said to have to come to Provence.



## Drink

The malty, golden pilsner brewed in Marseille, La Cagole. It's also a pejorative term for a scantily dressed lady short on chic – so be careful what you're calling across to the barmaid.

## Play

Pétanque, the quintessential French game in which metal balls are hurled towards a smaller wooden ball from a fixed standing position. It was born in Provence in 1910, and the name derives from 'ped tanca' in the local Provençal dialect – meaning 'tied feet'.



## Buy

A santon – a handmade, painted terracotta figurine that depicts a traditional character in Provençal village life, as used in nativity scenes. Head down and clasp his hat against the mistral wind, the shepherd is a favourite, as is the balding, pot-bellied priest.



## Tackle

Bouillabaisse – a stew that began as the rejects from a fisherman's catch and is now Marseille's signature dish. An authentic one should cost 50 euros per head or more, with at least four types of fish and a separate broth. Chez Gilbert in neighbouring Cassis has one of the best (chezgilbert.net).

## Look out for

Big names from the world of film, who can't seem to get enough of Provence. Keira Knightley married her singer husband James Righton in the Vaucluse village of Mazan in 2013, and director Ridley Scott was a perfect choice to adapt Peter Mayle's novel *A Good Year*, being a near neighbour of his in the Luberon. Surprisingly, the author has been forgiven for the Anglo stampede that followed his memoir *A Year in Provence*.







# *‘Your trip starts by your own secret bay’*

Calanque d'En Vau is one of the longest of the calanques (inlets) along the coast between Marseille and Cassis – most can only be reached by boat or on foot







# 1. Les Calanques

Don your hiking boots and pack your swimmers for a land-and-sea adventure taking in vertiginous cliffs and secluded beaches in the region known as the 'Mediterranean fjords'



**E**ACH CALANQUE HAS A distinct character,' says André Bernard as he leads the way down a stony path to a sliver of beach cupped by sparse limestone cliffs. 'Some are calm, some are very wild, just like people.' André is nearer the latter – in the nicest possible sense. As he walks he gesticulates in an unrestrained manner, muttering 'magnifique' to no-one in particular. When he's not guiding groups around Mont Blanc high in the Alps, he's here, striding along the trails that weave through this starkly beautiful coastline.

He glides down the loose stones and drops two-footed on to the creamy arc of Port Pin, one of the easternmost of the 24 calanques, or inlets, on this 12-mile stretch of coast. Most visitors head to the calanques

that lie closest to Marseille and Cassis, but it's easy to find solitude if you delve deeper into France's newest national park.

A cuckoo calls out, and wild rosemary mingles with the scent of pines. As the sun crests the headland, the first trickle of walkers begins to emerge at the treeline. André points out a trail and sets off. The path meanders in and out of sure-footed pines, enlivened with pockets of colour: the yellow of immortelle flowers, which don't fade after picking; the purply starbursts of globe daisies. 'I've been exploring the Calanques since I was eight,' says André. 'On the main paths you see plenty of people, but you step away from these and it's just the birds, the wind, the sun... and you.'

Reaching an outcrop, he gestures down

at Calanque d'En Vau, a vertical 150 metres below. At its mouth, waves detonate into mushroom clouds of spray but, cradled deep inside the inlet, the beach is gently stroked by an unruffled sea of implausible aquamarine. The steep path down strays inland before emerging at the deserted shingle beach, where the water is cool and inviting. 'We have a saying,' says André, 'Les Calanques se meritent. It means that these pleasures have to be earned.' A pause. 'Of course, it's a lot easier by boat.'

An hour later, André's old friend Frédéric is deftly steering his boat through the waves. Port Pin passes, then d'En Vau. All is quiet, save for the throb of the outboard and some seagulls spiralling overhead. Far above, pines peer over the cliff edge like hesitant penguins on an ice





The port of Cassis is famous for its local white wine. **BELOW** André Bernard has a head for heights

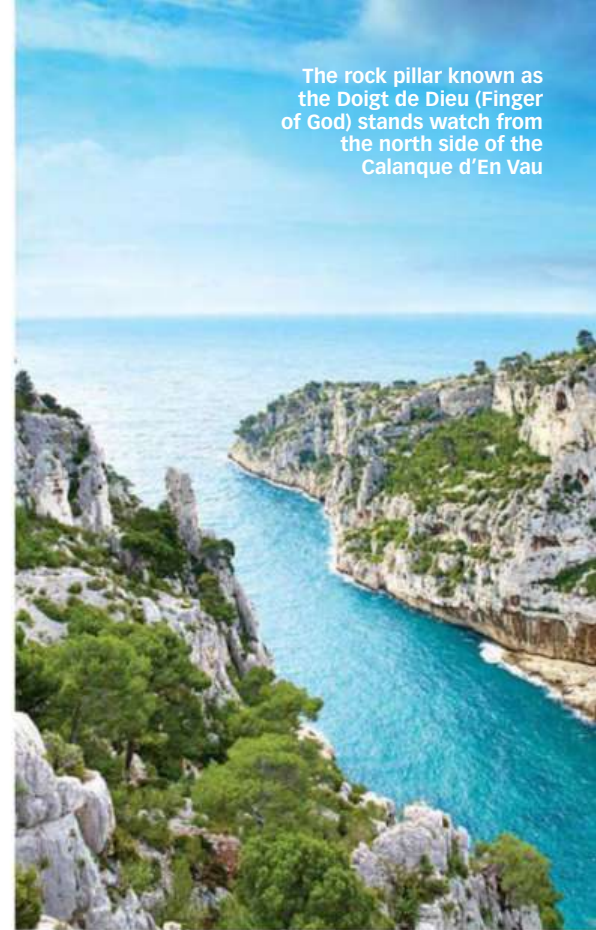
floe. 'This stretch is the real Calanques,' says Frédéric, squinting up at the ridge known as La Grande Candelle. 'It's so wild – yet so close to Marseille.'

Frédéric rounds a rock pillar, disturbing a cormorant that takes flight in a peculiarly manic way, and eases the boat alongside a small triangular arch in the rock. At first it looks like a cave, though the interior is flooded with light. 'We call this the cathedral,' he says. 'When it's calmer you can actually swim in there and look all the way up to the sky. Every time I come out here, I find something different. Different, but always wonderful.'

Time to head inland – from Cassis it's under two hours north by car to Séguret in the Dentelles de Montmirail on the A52, A8 and A7 motorways. ➡



The rock pillar known as the Doigt de Dieu (Finger of God) stands watch from the north side of the Calanque d'En Vau



## Essentials



**La Garrigue** Set in a secluded spot above Cassis, this is a chambre d'hôtes in the image of its host, Sylvie – colourful, welcoming and mildly eccentric. There's a mix of individually styled rooms: some are tucked beneath the family's portion of the cerise-hued house; others are up in the eaves. Décor is rustic and unfussy, with low timber beds and patterned lamps, and there's a pool on the terrace. There are easier places to find in Cassis – its snaking lanes and one-way systems will have the satnav scratching its head – but your persistence will be rewarded with a pleasing sense of isolation (from US\$125; [lagarriguecassis.com](http://lagarriguecassis.com)).

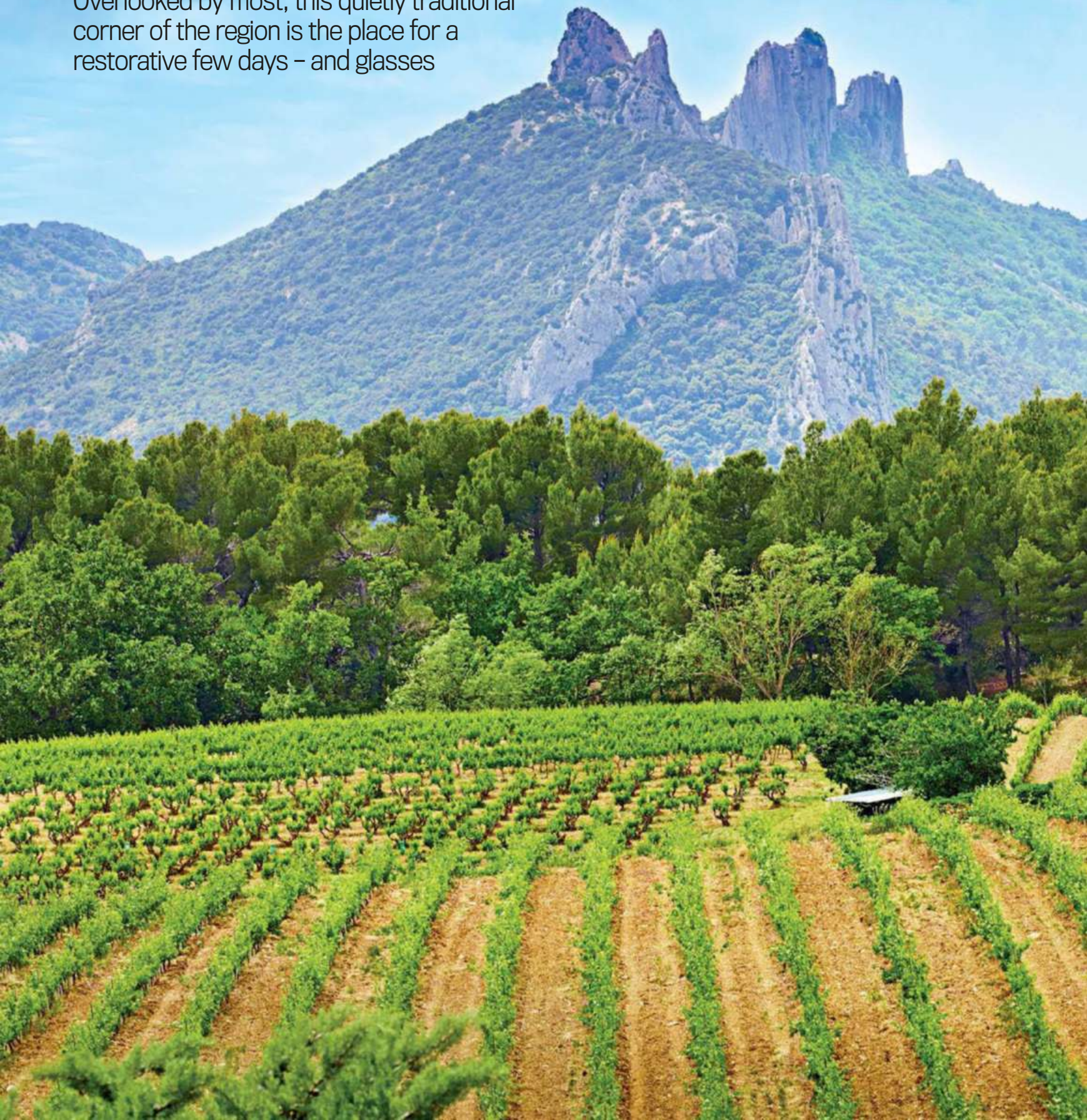
**Les Calanques** became a national park in 2012 ([calanques-parcnational.fr](http://calanques-parcnational.fr)). Walking and boat tours with André and Frédéric can be arranged through Cassis tourism ([ot-cassis.com](http://ot-cassis.com)).



## 2. Les Dentelles de Montmirail

Overlooked by most, this quietly traditional corner of the region is the place for a restorative few days – and glasses

The jagged Dentelles de Montmirail rise above rows of vines near the village of Suzette, within the broader Côtes du Rhône wine region





**E**VEN THE MOST linguistically challenged would have a fair chance of deciphering the road signs in this part of Provence. ‘Vent violent,’ they warn – a reference to the mistral winds that gather steam a hundred miles north near Lyon and barrel down the Rhône Valley with a scouring velocity. They can be as persistent as they are potent. Mistral-induced madness is not unheard of and there are lingering claims of it being used as mitigation in murder trials.

Yet the mistral is far from simply an ill wind. ‘It works as a fantastic dehumidifier, reducing disease among the vines and protecting them from frost,’ says Kate McKinlay, sitting outside the mas (farmhouse) of her family-run vineyard, Domaine de Mourchon. ‘And it has a wonderful effect on the light; at the end of a six- or nine-day mistral the air clarity is astonishing. Everything seems so... polished. It makes you think you can paint like Van Gogh.’

The vineyard is framed by the toothy Dentelles de Montmirail range and, beyond, the imposing silhouette of the ‘giant of Provence’, Mont Ventoux. Aged vines flow to the fringes of the house’s manicured lawn where Kate’s dog Bella lazily toys with a butterfly. A tree swing under a lone pine sways in the breeze, offering a view of olive groves and parcels of vines unfurling to the hazy floodplain of the Rhône below.

For this 48-year-old Londoner and her family, Provençal life has not been without

its challenges. ‘We arrived 14 years ago knowing almost nothing about wine production,’ says Kate, uncorking a Grenache-and-Syrah-blend rosé. ‘Most of our neighbours had been farming for 12 to 14 generations. So of course they were watching to see if we would trip up.’ She laughs. ‘In the end, the local community proved surprisingly easy to crack.’

Séguret, the medieval village after which the local appellation is named, is a short stroll away. In the warmth of mid afternoon, slivers of golden light permeate its steep, cobbled lanes, illuminating gargoyled fountains and centuries-old timber shutters. In the church, dust gathers in the window frames like the coating on an esteemed vintage. Beneath the wrought-iron belfry hangs a single-hand clock from 1680; fittingly, it seems to have stopped.

On the plains below, life is more in evidence. Miniature tractors potter back and forth, and workers bend from the waist to attend to crooked, leathery vines far older than themselves. ‘I think that’s what people really love about Les Dentelles,’ says Kate, back at the domaine. ‘It’s a working area, industrial if you like, but in the most bucolic sense. Other Provençal villages have been gentrified and colonised, but here you feel that life is going on.’

With the heat of the day easing, the first few customers begin to trickle in. Kate’s father, Walter, stands behind his elaborate tasting counter like the captain of the Enterprise, loyally flagging up his wife

Ronnie’s homemade olive oil. Once derided as ‘ballon de rouge’, or table wine, the output of the Rhône Valley is fast gaining credence, helped by better marketing and, almost certainly, an influx of new ideas and energy. ‘When we arrived, the Provençal lifestyle – the pace of life – used to frustrate me,’ says Kate. ‘But it’s all about rhythm. The French attitude to wine is that it’s less about quantity, more about quality, and in a way that’s a metaphor for life out here.’

Kate whistles to Bella and sets off up the hillside to the mas, as the first stirrings of wind from the valley below catch the leaves of the ancient vines.

Follow the mistral back south, retracing your route until exit 24 of the A7, and then taking local roads to St-Rémy-de-Provence – an hour’s drive in all. ➡

## Essentials

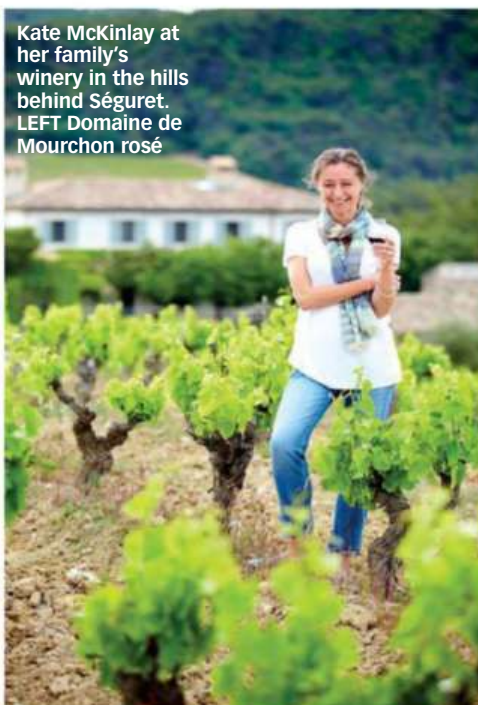


**Les Florets** With service as memorable as its setting, and a restaurant you’d happily travel far out of your way to reach, this is a hotel that few people end up visiting just once. The thick-stone property stands just outside Gigondas, four miles south of Séguret, beneath the limestone ridge for which the region of Les Dentelles is named. Apéritifs can be taken on the fairy-lit terrace, with its century-old centrepiece plane tree, or, on colder evenings, around the bar’s log fire. Dishes are both innovative and locally sourced – don’t miss the langoustine sushi with asparagus – while manager/owner Thierry will help you navigate a wine list with the bulk of a telephone directory. A spicy red from Domaine La Garrigue, the hotel’s sister vineyard on the plains below, is a good starting point (from US\$140.50; hotel-lesflorets.com).

**Domaine de Mourchon** offers wine tastings, vineyard tours and catering for larger groups (domainedemourchon.com).



Kate McKinlay at her family’s winery in the hills behind Séguret. LEFT Domaine de Mourchon rosé





# 3. Les Alpilles

Easy ambles, or ‘balades’, are the order of the day in a miniature mountain range blessed with painterly light and subtle surprises at every turn

**E**XACTLY A CENTURY AND a quarter ago, the trails that entwine the Alpilles would have been frequented by a distinctive character. Flame-haired, gaunt and bearded, he would have been conspicuous for the easel he carried and for one striking characteristic – a missing left ear. Vincent Van Gogh enjoyed one of his most productive periods during the year he spent at the St-Paul Asylum in the foothills of this elongated, untamed massif. Admitting himself in 1889, shortly after his act of self-mutilation, he was at first confined to his cell in this former abbey.

Quickly it was agreed, however, that the artist should be allowed out to paint, and pacify his tormented mind. He was permitted to walk for up to one hour every day, to find inspiration on these paths. Van Gogh averaged a work a day in the months that followed, honing the richly chromatic style that was to become his hallmark. ‘His palette exploded when he came here,’ says naturalist Frédéric Bouvet. ‘The white of the stone, the green of the forest, the blue of the sky – I call this primary-colour country.’

Frédéric is standing at an intersection of paths on the spine of the Alpilles. St-Rémy-de-Provence, the pretty market town from where we had set off, is visible on the plain below. With binoculars swinging from his neck, a Collins bird guide under his arm

and a duck call for his ringtone, it’s not difficult to see where Frédéric’s priorities lie. His passion has taken him all over the world and seen him work with David Attenborough. But one visit to Les Alpilles in 1987 was all it took. He moved here shortly afterwards and has spent the past 25 years exploring the estimated 60 miles of trails with a distinct lack of urgency.

‘Listen,’ says Frédéric, raising a finger to his ear. For once it’s not a bird call – rather a tinkling, at first faint but building in volume. A newly sheared sheep, bronze bell at its neck, appears on the path below. Then another, and another. The 400-strong herd swarms past, and is followed by an overwhelming scent of thyme – the herb on which the sheep had grazed that morning. Urged on by a brusque shepherd, they continue to the plateau, a bubbling stream of white disappearing up the hillside.

We turn on to a small pebbled path lined with squat holm oak and feathery cheveux d’ange (angel’s hair grass). The path traces a narrowing ridge between two valleys coated with the aromatic scrub known in these parts as garrigue. Partitioning these is a protruding sheet of limestone through which the wind has eked out, over millennia, two neat circular holes broad enough to step through. Three Alpine swifts trill as they fly in tight circles against the face, feasting on insects

corralled by the eddies, while a kestrel hangs motionless, eyes probing the scrub for lizards. As the wind abates, a chorus of warblers and a lone nightingale call floats up from the valleys.

‘You can’t believe the hours I’ve spent in this spot,’ says Frédéric, slumping against the rock like it’s a favourite armchair. ‘We used to have a pair of Egyptian vultures nesting just across the valley there. Would you believe, I could actually see them turning their eggs.’ From his rucksack, he produces a crumpled postcard of a painting. It’s instantly recognisable as a Van Gogh. Beyond the fluid, exaggerated swirls of olive trees in the foreground is a dimpled mountain range into which two circular arches have been painted – the spot beneath which Frédéric now sits.

A former town councillor in St-Rémy, he has a grand plan to have this section of the Alpilles declared a nature reserve. ‘People in France talk about “patrimoine”,’ he says. ‘It means what we pass on to our children. Wealth, but not in a financial sense. This place has so much of that.’

From the rocky Alpilles to the flatlands of the Camargue it’s less than an hour by car, crossing the eastern fork of the Rhône in historic Arles. ➡

## Essentials

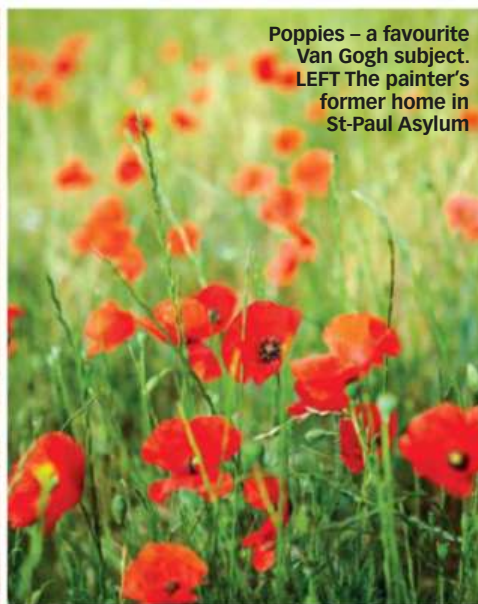


**Le Prince**

**Noir** A true original, this three-room chambre d’hôtes burrows deep into the rocky spur around which Les-Baux-de-Provence is built, and is one of only two places you can

overnight in the old hilltop town. Rooms under beamed ceilings are brightened with a reproduction Matisse print or a medieval tapestry, while oversized windows show off the sloping cobbled streets below and the Alpilles beyond. The shaded rooftop terrace is an excellent spot for a sundowner. Have a word with hosts Ute and Benoît and they’ll give you a card to access the ruins of the Château des Baux, which rise from the stone plateau above and are visible from miles around (from US\$132.67; leprincenoir.com).

**Bureau des Guides Naturalistes** offers bird and nature tours of Les Alpilles (guide-nature.jimdo.com).





A view of Les-Baux-de-Provence, in the southern Alpilles, from the ruined hilltop Château des Baux







Mustering a bull on horseback in the heart of the Camargue. OPPOSITE Volunteer guardians of the Camargue, from left: Jean-Paul, Patrick and Philippe

## 4. Camargue

It's not clear what he'd make of the bright-patterned shirts, but in other ways this is Clint Eastwood country. Venture into the Rhône Delta to see Provence's very own cowboys

**T**HERE'S A THUNDER OF hooves as nearly half a ton of bull explodes through the open gate before veering off at a wild tangent. Jean-Paul Quintin spots the danger and, with a snap of the reins and squeeze of his heels, swings his mount around and accelerates ahead to cut off the angle. For an instant, horse and bull are running flat out, side by side, the latter's lyre-shaped horns set at a menacing angle. Gradually, Jean-Paul's steed edges in front. With a snort, the bull slows and considers its fast-diminishing options. It lets out a primordial bellow, pauses, and then reluctantly falls back in line, trotting into the waiting pen. Jean-Paul canters back to wait for the next arrival. Not bad for a man three years short of his 70th birthday.

Seen upside-down on a map, the mouth of the Rhône is not unlike the horns of a bull. The river splits just north of Arles, and the area between the two main branches is the Camargue – a 360-square-mile delta defined by its absence of landmarks, with swathes of lagoon, marsh and paddy field. For somewhere so open, it's strangely disorientating, the eye struggling to find focus or perspective in this semi-submerged world. Ghosting through the landscape are the region's famous white horses. They can be glimpsed munching in the tall reeds, or striding through the marshes, oblivious to

the small birds using them as water taxis. Every so often, a distant drumming will interrupt the stillness as an unseen herd breaks into a spontaneous gallop nearby.

The horses are not wild, alas. The Camargue is cattle country at heart, and the horses – and the 'guardians' like Jean-Paul who own and ride them – play a crucial role. These Gallic cowboys wear the traditional outfit of patterned shirt (called chemise Camarguaise), waistcoat and taupe trousers with piping down the leg. Extra flourishes such as the glinting 'JPQ' initials that adorn the back of Jean-Paul's saddle like a personalised number plate are entirely their own. 'There are nearly 150 ranches in the Camargue but only 60 or so professional cowboys,' says Jean-Paul, patting his horse, Li Vento – Provençal for 'the winds'. 'That's where we come in. Enthusiastic amateurs, you might call us. We're certainly that – some weeks I do this every day.'

Jean-Paul and his two fellow guardians, Patrick and Philippe, work as a unit with the manadier (farm manager). There's salt on the breeze, and a faint chiming of bells from the coastal town of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer a few miles south. Job completed, the trio tip their hats to the manadier and clip-clop back to the ranch's stables, chatting amicably and gently ribbing Philippe for his flowing locks.

The bulls they've helped to round up are destined not for the abattoir but the arena. They take part in the course Camarguaise – a bloodless variation on traditional Spanish bullfighting in which rosettes are snatched from the charging animal. Not quite grabbing the bull by the horns, but mighty close. The bulls can compete for 10 years or more and are managed like thoroughbreds. In some cases they earn as much – up to 10,000 euros for a 15-minute appearance.

'There's a harmony to life here in the Camargue,' says Jean-Paul, sponging off his horse's immaculate coat. 'You can really see the mutual respect between the bulls and horses when they work together, and it's the same with man and bull. After a career in the arena, the great bulls are buried standing up and facing south. I like that.'

The three cowboys finish their coffees, say their farewells and remount their steeds. If the bulls perform well, a glass of decent vin rouge will greet their next visit – the only reward these 'hired guns' require for work they would happily pay to do.

Away from the saddle and back in the car seat, Marseille is 1½ hours' drive to the east along the A54 and A7 motorways. ➡

### Essentials



**Manade des Baumelles** To really immerse yourself in life on a Camargue cattle ranch, you have to stay at one. Run by personable 'manadier' Guillaume, Baumelles made its name rearing bulls for the arena. It offers a six-person gîte, and two stylishly contemporary rooms that belie this most rustic of settings. After a hot day in the Rhône Delta, you can leave your cowboy boots on the stoop to cool down in the air-conditioned rooms, and wake to the sound of whinnying and bellowing outside the white blinds. Meals can be taken with the guardians in a simple dining room adorned with rosettes, while tractor and riding tours of the surrounding pastures can be arranged on request (from US\$125; [manade-des-baumelles.camargue.fr](http://manade-des-baumelles.camargue.fr)).

**Arles tourism** covers the Camargue region ([arlestourisme.com/the-camargue.html](http://arlestourisme.com/the-camargue.html)).



Chevaux De La Manade





Evening in the  
heart of Le Panier

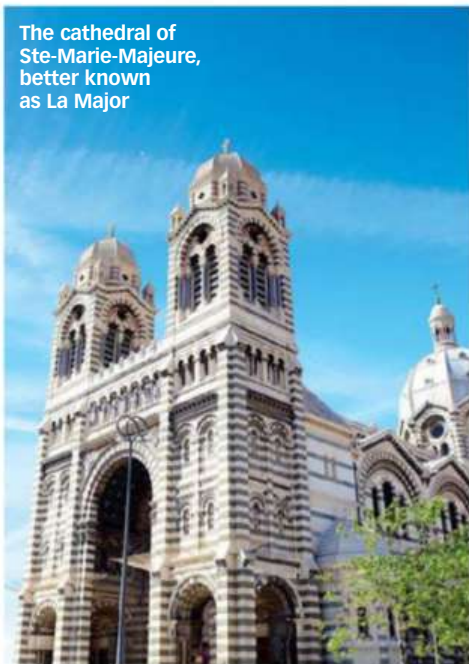




## 5. Le Panier, Marseille

The hilly 'quartier' once condemned as an overpopulated underworld is the place to find some of the city's brightest artists, craftspeople and designers at work

The cathedral of Ste-Marie-Majeure, better known as La Major



**D**AWN BREAKS OVER THE oldest district of France's oldest city. Shutters creak open, the ubiquitous washing is threaded through clothes lines, and the scraping of wood on stone echoes down the steep streets as tables are pulled out in front of cafés. My-Linh Mary is also busy placing a table and chairs outside her shop – though it sells neither refreshments nor food of any sort. 'This is just where we eat,' she says. 'My partner and I have our coffee here in the morning, and we'll shut up shop for a bit of lunch later. It's that sort of neighbourhood. For my birthday we had 10 of us out here for dinner; at around 6pm the sun comes straight down the street, and the light is magical.' She pauses. 'We're in the big city but, in many ways, Le Panier is more of a village.'

At first sight, My-Linh's shop – the Bazar du Panier – could be mistaken for a garden centre. Pot plants mass on windowsills and congregate at street level, vegetation gently colonising the peeling pastel façade of the three-storey terrace. A fashion designer by trade, My-Linh's garment, bag and jewellery creations are arranged artfully in the boutique: dresses draped over a brace of old theatre seats; necklaces and accessories tucked into the compartments of post-office sorting shelves. 'I use old techniques,

recycled fabrics, retro French embroidery,' she says. 'I suppose you'd call what I do vintage – exactly like this quartier.'

Le Panier means 'basket', a reference to the market, or agora, that flourished here 2,500 years ago, when it was the Ancient Greek city of Massalia. But even the most ardent Marseillais would confess that, in the intervening centuries, it became more of a basket case. Its labyrinthine lanes, unforgiving gradient and dock-side setting saw it thrive in all the wrong ways, from red-light district to drugs ghetto. The Nazis found it so impenetrable, and its layout so conducive to fomenting resistance, that they simply dynamited entire streets.

In recent years, however, it is not criminality but creativity that lurks around every corner. A short walk from Bazar du Panier, My-Linh's good friend Adjé is at work in the back of her shop-cum-studio, Adjanas. Her sewing machine thrums quietly as a fitted dress made from a thick roll of red and yellow floral cloth gradually takes shape. Like the creations displayed on hangers, shelves and mannequins around her, the piece brings to mind the vividly coloured finery of traditional African dress – a signature look derived from the West African country of her birth, Togo. 'Le Panier wasn't my first choice when I moved to Marseille, oh no,' she says, her face dissolving into the broadest of smiles. 'But I quickly came to love it here. I call the clothes I make "metisé". It means, half and half, a blend of African and European. This is the essence of Marseille.'

Further down the Rue du Panier, the first intrepid visitors are beginning to materialise. They climb the hill in instalments, tugging at worn railings jutting from coarse stone walls, resting feet on polished flagstones. A couple emerges at the summit of the tunnel-like street, squinting in the manner of mountaineers confronted by a new dawn. Above them, the sky is barely visible, the narrow gap between facing terraces closed off by wall plants, obsolete oil lamps and neat pockets of washing suspended beneath shutters.

They pause at a café offering tapas and flavours of homemade quiche scrawled on a framed blackboard, before ducking into a low-ceilinged space protected by a bead curtain. The interior is deep and narrow, like a boathouse, and crowded with an uncategorisable array of items, from comic

books to canes, well-fingered typewriters to antique suitcases. A vintage music system sits in a corner, clearly some way past its melodic best. It's part flea market, part retro exhibition, with little sign as to whether the items are on display or for sale. Lucas, the owner, seems unconcerned about this. He can be found sitting with his partner My-Linh outside her shop a short walk away, enjoying his morning coffee. As throughout Le Panier, there's a sense that commerce comes a distant second to creative expression. 'We're proud to say we're from Le Panier,' says My-Linh. 'In most cities you work and then you sleep. Up here, away from the crowds, people take more time to live and to enjoy.'

### Essentials



**La Pension Edelweiss** Hiding behind a slightly forbidding exterior in a nondescript street a short walk from Le Panier is one of Marseille's more surprising accommodation options. The five parquet-floored rooms in this faded terrace are full of character, and each bears the imprint of owner Bernadette, an inveterate collector of vintage furnishings. Juxtapositions abound: weathered leather armchairs and neon signs; movie-set spotlights and chandeliers; '70s fridges and stained-glass windows. Room 189 has its own bougainvillea-draped terrace. Marseille's historic artery of La Canebière, leading to the Vieux-Port, is a couple of minutes' walk away (from US\$109.26; [pension-edelweiss.fr](http://pension-edelweiss.fr)).

**Marseille's** visitor information site is [marseille-tourisme.com](http://marseille-tourisme.com). For various themed and free walks in the city, see [marseilleprovencegreeters.com](http://marseilleprovencegreeters.com).



# MONGOLIA'S MANIFESTO

The sky is the limit for city and nomadic Mongolians, and this spirit of freedom cultivates a philosophical and entrepreneurial way of life that sees them contributing to a blossoming city. We visit Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia for a peek into its heart and soul

WORDS ESTHER FAITH LEW ● PHOTOGRAPHS ESTHER FAITH LEW, VICTOR TOH






**S**HE IS TALL AND FAIR, exuding a genteel elegance in her mannerism as she welcomed us with Mongolian sweets and smiles that lent a gracious vivacity to her demeanour. Yet, her countenance was strong and her gaze engaged me with confidence. Far from being demure, she had the air of royalty and she cut a striking silhouette in her deel, a traditional costume in vivid blue with ornate gilded detailing. That was my official welcome to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

This feminine and graceful welcome was an apt one too, considering that women rule in Mongolia. Yes, that's right. While the men were out on the battlefields taking care of foreign affairs, the women kept home and community affairs in order. They ruled then and enjoyed privileges and a status that even women in developed countries can only claim to truly enjoy in recent decades. They had the right to divorce their husbands and inherit estates, becoming the heads of households. After Chinggis Khaan's

death, it was the women who assumed positions of power and ruled three-quarters of the Mongol empire. A famous example of female power was Princess Khutulun who proved her prowess in battle and could pin down any man on the wrestling floor.

Today, Mongolian women continue to excel – in their studies and careers. They make up about 70 percent of university students and are performers in academic excellence as well, with many moving on to own businesses that drive the economy today. A recent market research on SMEs and women-owned SMEs in Mongolia was conducted by Frankfurt School of Finance & Management and Independent Research Institute of Mongolia in mid-2014 to aid policy-making. It revealed that the proof of the pudding lay in the business building: one hundred and nineteen respondents out of the 240 interviewed in the research study are women, placing them on par with male entrepreneurs in Ulaanbaatar, Darkhan and Erdenet.



Hustai National Park is a protected area that plays an important part in conserving the ecosystem, which has abundant species of flora and fauna



# MONGOLIA

## HORSE POWER

It looks like my trip bodes well of pleasant and educational surprises, thanks to the lovely welcome organised by Juulchin World Tours, a local travel agency specialising in in-bound tours. And as we hopped onto the bus for the 40 minute ride to our hotel, I was in for another surprise. Everyone knows of Mongolians' passion for horses and riding them – and yes, horsepower is most certainly on display in the city, with 4WDs at the top of the list. You have the Land Rover with 240hp, the Toyota Land Cruiser with 282hp and your usual Volkswagens, Hyundais, Mercedes-Benzs and a variety of Toyotas whizzing by on the streets.

While I most certainly did not expect Mongolians in the capital city to be riding to work on stallions, I did not expect the high number of cars on the streets. It was 4.30pm and traffic was beginning to slow down to a crawl. My guide Munkhbat said that peak hour traffic is getting to be a nightmare in the city, and shared that Mongolians did not like to use public transport, which was not very well developed, and they preferred to own cars. "Driving on the roads can be a little tricky for those who are new; for example, we have both left- and right-hand drive, and drivers can overtake on either side. This is because the city imports a high percentage of second-



Past, present and future collide in the cityscape to create a diverse culture that embraces development

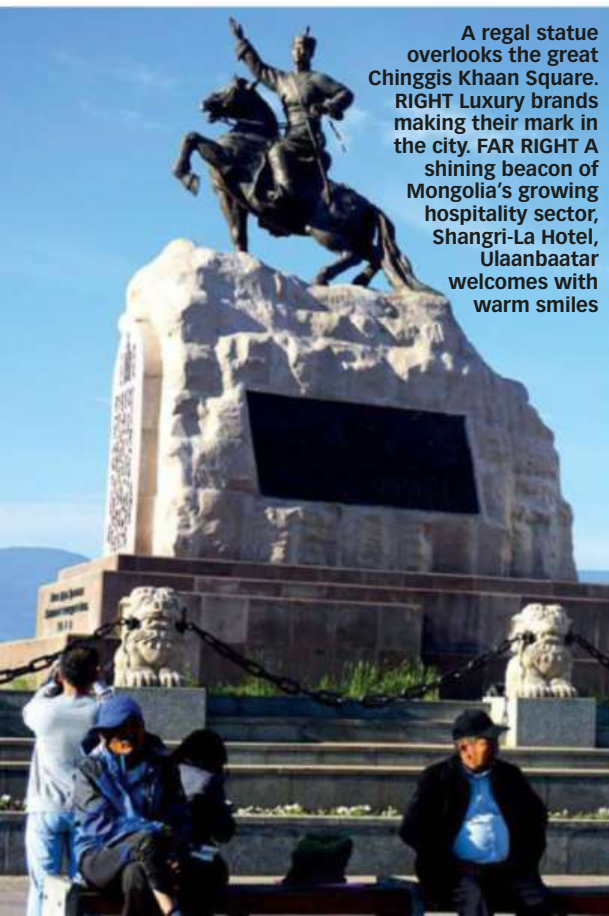
hand cars from many countries. So, there is a mix of left- and right-hand drive," he adds. Testimony to the high ownership of cars was the presence of petrol stations I spotted every few minutes, and apparently, car dealerships for Ferrari and Porsche will be adding more muscle to the horsepower market as well.

The cityscape is fascinating to observe – you have a mix of old apartment buildings from the Russian-era and abandoned buildings with decrepit compounds right alongside glass-clad skyscrapers and many more clad in scaffoldings and in various stages of construction. And sandwiched right in between these buildings, there were gers

as well. I pointed this out to Munkhbat. "City development planning was a little bit lax, so it was very easy to set up little offices and build them on any available space. That creates a problem for buildings; they don't have parking space," he shares.

## SLICK IN THE CITY

We arrived at our hotel – the spanking new 290-room Shangri-la Hotel, Ulaanbaatar right in the middle of downtown city. Recently opened in June, the hotel is part of a Shangri-la complex that will host luxury apartments as well as retail and office space, due to be completed in the third



A regal statue overlooks the great Chinggis Khaan Square. RIGHT Luxury brands making their mark in the city. FAR RIGHT A shining beacon of Mongolia's growing hospitality sector, Shangri-La Hotel, Ulaanbaatar welcomes with warm smiles





The Central Post Office and other financial and commercial buildings are located near Chinggis Khaan Square



quarter of 2016. The location is wonderful; just a couple of streets away is the buzzing Chinggis Khaan Square and the Opera House, and right in front of the hotel is the preserved Choijin Lama Temple, which was converted into a museum in 1938. A stone's throw away is the marriage registry; a bonus for couples holding their wedding banquets in Shangri-la's sumptuous ballroom. On the other side to the south, you have the Nairamdal Park, which features an amusement park that is perfect for families with young children. We were greeted by a doorman dressed in a dazzling blue traditional deel, and swiftly checked in by a front desk staff.

After we had freshened up, we headed out to explore Chinggis Khaan Square (formerly known as Sükhbaatar Square). Named after Damdin Sükhbaatar, who led Mongolia to its independence in July 1921, the square was abuzz with tourists snapping away as locals relaxed on benches while children played on electric toy cars. Fronting the square is the Parliament House with an imposing bronze statue of Chinggis Khaan flanked by those of his sons Ögedei and Kublai. I was about to ascend the steps leading to the

entrance to take a closer look when a military officer quickly approached me and waved me away. Munkhbat informed me that there must be a visiting dignitary as the red carpet was rolled out. We found out later that the president of Myanmar was in town. We hoped that his excellency would not be disrupting our tour.

Surrounding the square are a number of cultural landmarks such as the 1970s Soviet-style Cultural Palace hosting the Mongolian National Modern Art Gallery and other institutions, the State Opera & Ballet Theatre and the National History Museum; the Mongolian Stock Exchange, the Central Post Office, the Golomt Bank and the gleaming Central Tower with its hard-to-miss Louis Vuitton boutique claiming prime frontage. It is a setting that makes it convenient for business and leisure visitors to plan an enjoyable evening of art, culture and shopping after a day of meetings in the vicinity. After dinner at the hotel's all-day dining Café Park, Naadam bar and grill or Hutong restaurant, take a 10-minute stroll to the square before heading to a performance of your choice. That would be on my list the next time I'm visiting.

## Essentials



### Where to Shop

Do not leave Ulaanbaatar without buying cashmere gifts. No, it is not a sales spiel. Considering the price, it is well worth your while to pick up some high-quality cashmere, a signature product of Mongolia.

The State Department Store, located on Peace Ave 44, is a big building stocking everything from home wares, electronics, cosmetics, apparel and accessories, books and souvenirs to a food court and a large supermarket. There is also a foreign exchange counter on the first floor. It is popular with locals and tourists, so do expect a crowd.

If you prefer something more upmarket, head to Cashmere Boutique on Seoul Street for a trendy collection of apparel.





Muuggi, our host for the afternoon, prepares fresh curd and salty milk tea

## WILD WONDERLAND

The next day, we headed out to Terelj National Park, which is 80km from the city. It was a good two hours' drive, but the vista of endless rolling green plains and clear blue skies was worth it. It may be a tourist attraction but the space is so vast that you will hardly notice it is peak season for tourists. The attractions include the Khagiin Khar Lake – a 20-metre-deep glacial lake, the Yestil Hot Water Springs, the Aryabala Monastery, the 13th Century National Park and the Chinggis Khaan Monument, including a thriving ecosystem that is home to over 250 varieties of birds and unusual rock formations. We stopped to take a look at

the Turtle Rock, which casts an unusual silhouette against the backdrop of the valley. Rock climbers could attempt to get up onto the turtle's "head" for a superb view of the valley.

Next, we took 116 steps up a hill to find peace at Aryabala Monastery. Determined to face the panting, I focused on the faraway end point, which looked rather high, and I tried to empty my mind. To aid contemplative thoughts, signboards with philosophical messages along the way imparted wisdom, foresight and plain honesty. My favourite one was: "Our present lives are as dirty as a pig's. But if you try a little to get out of this state, you will have the potential to become



The Turtle Rock in Terelj National Park is one of its unique sights. RIGHT FROM TOP Aryabala Monastery affords contemplative moments in the meditation chamber; an imposing 40-metre-high statue of Chinggis Khaan



enlightened.” Yes – I am all in favour of a spa session with facial, scrub and body wrap. It was well worth it though, reaching the top. We entered the meditation temple and into a space that seemed to reverb with good energy, mixed with the quiet vibes of a constant stream of locals and tourists coming in to offer prayers. I went three rounds with the prayer wheels to ask for a smooth change in my life.

For a peek into the nomadic life, we had the lovely opportunity to be hosted by Muuggi in her family ger. She used to be a lecturer in a Mongolian university but has since retired. Now, she lives a simple but busy life tending to her herd, assisted by her daughter. The 71-year-old bustled

about preparing tea with cheese and curds, even excusing herself at one point to take a call on her mobile. I asked Munkhbat how she makes a living for herself and her daughter. “She lives on her pension. Mongolia has a very good pension system for herders and they are well taken care of. The bigger their herd, the bigger their pension. Women start to get their pension at 55 years old and that is usually enough for their families. Even her daughter who is still young and could not find a job in the city, will be able to provide for herself with this pension that Muuggi is getting, including living on the food and products that their herd provides,” Munkhbat shares.

At 71, Muuggi moved about with the vigour of a younger woman, with a ruddy countenance that hailed of good health, and seemed delighted to give this bunch of journalists a peek into the raw beauty of a nomadic life. Her day typically begins early at 6.30am where she milks the cows and prepares it for breakfast. After which she cleans the ger, washes up and starts to prepare lunch, a simple meal of yoghurt and soup. Preparations for dinner are similar, with another round of milking in the evening. Hospitality comes naturally to Mongolians, and despite disrupting her routine, Muuggi was patient in showing us how she made fresh curd, even graciously posing for photos with us.



## HISTORY SPEAKS VOLUMES

The next day, after a night of deep slumber in our luxury ger, we headed out to visit the 13th Century National Park, which comprises a series of themed camps spread out over the steppes. Along the way, we made a stop at a most imposing monument – the Chinggis Khaan Monument. In the middle of nowhere, as our van sped on along an endless stretch of deserted highway, there suddenly loomed ahead a gleaming silver monster of a statue. Standing 40 metres high, and perched atop a European-style circular building with 36 columns representing the Chinggis Khaan family, there sat Chinggis Khaan on horseback, cutting an imposing figure against the landscape. Within this complex are stunning collections of historical artefacts housed within well-designed modern museums such as the Museum of Bronze Age. One of the highlights of this complex is the prized viewpoint of the surrounds from the top of the statue, accessed via an escalator and winding steps. During the Naadam Festival in July, the grounds would be abuzz with sporting activities such as wrestling and archery competitions.

After this up close and dramatic encounter with Chinggis Khaan, we headed over to Chinggis Khaan's King's Palace in the 13th Century National Park to see how Chinggis Khaan and his soldiers lived in his time. The ride there was quite an experience and left me in awe of the driver's



Enter a shaman's tent at the 13th Century National Park for a glimpse into the past. **BELOW** Learning about basic skills for food preparation at the Education Camp



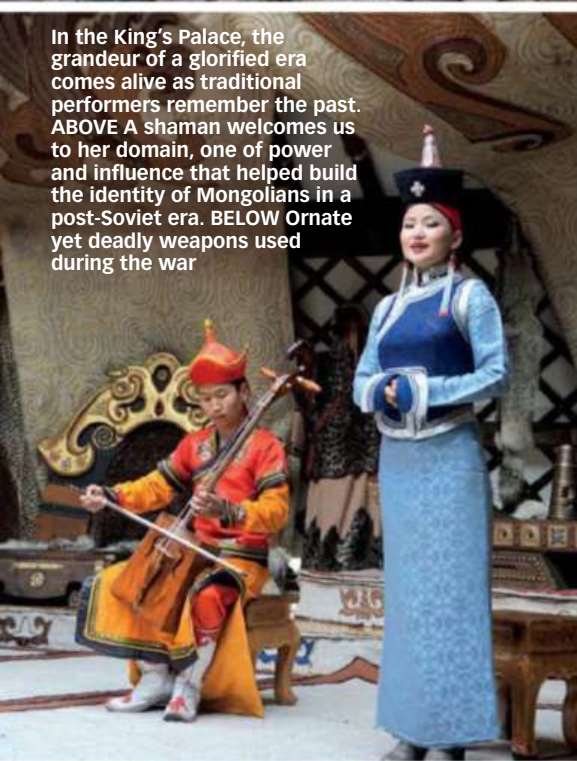








In the King's Palace, the grandeur of a glorified era comes alive as traditional performers remember the past. ABOVE A shaman welcomes us to her domain, one of power and influence that helped build the identity of Mongolians in a post-Soviet era. BELOW Ornate yet deadly weapons used during the war



internal GPS system. We were literally driving over the plains on little dirt tracks, with every other way looking – well, the same. Needless to say, when we eventually reached our destination, we definitely had a deep impression and admiration for Mongolia's vast territory. Chinggis Khaan's ger was the largest and most luxurious, decorated with animal pelts and heads mounted as trophies. We had a quick lunch of Mongolian gambir (pancakes) with vegetable salad and noodles.

Right after, we visited the Shamans' Camp and were introduced to this belief system that encompassed religion, ancestor and nature worship and medicine. "If you have a problem, you ask the shamans; and if you are sick, they will heal you as well," Munkhbat shares. Revered as the link between the spiritual and physical worlds, shamans have traditionally enjoyed powerful positions in society, and in the post-Soviet era, they played an important part in resurrecting the identity of an independent Mongolia and restored the faith and sense of belonging in its people. In the camp, the shaman was happy to explain the intricacies of her world and invited us to explore the various gers decked out in authentic furnishings, complete with offering tables that were

strewn with notes and coins left by visitors. I would have loved to witness a ritual, but for this shaman, I guess there were other immediate concerns. She shouted after her two young boys, who were gleefully running about and striking martial arts poses for us. Maybe she was telling them to go do their homework – or else.

We also toured the Education Camp, which displayed Mongolian arts and crafts. We also incidentally discovered a new fashion trend there. The lady manning the camp wore stylish white leather Mongolian boots that looked really good with her deel. I think we made her day with our compliments. Over in the Guard Camp, we perused battle gear and weapons that were used and worn by soldiers. Leaving the two guards manning the camp, we settled back into our seats and got ready for our two and half hour ride back to the city. I wonder what made those two boys decide to take up a summer vacation job at the camp; there was no wi-fi, no nothing to entertain them in between visits from tourists. Perhaps battle games. Perhaps the belief system of tengrism and of worshipping khuukh (blue) and tengri (sky) is all they need in this land fondly referred to as "the land of eternal blue sky". ☺

## Essentials



**Alungoo Ger Hotel** "How many stars are luxury hotels usually given? Five or six? In Mongolia, when you stay out here in a luxury ger, you get the 5,000-star treatment," Munkhbat cheekily shares. It was our first night in our luxury ger, and we were hoping for a clear night for star gazing. Unfortunately, our wishes were not fulfilled; it remained cloudy and with the temperature dipping to 10 deg Celsius, we scurried back to the warm comfort of our gers.

Part of the Guru Eco Complex, Alungoo is perfect for those who want an authentic experience, yet enjoy modern amenities, and within the cosy interior of my two-bed ger, a surprise awaited me behind a hanging tapestry – a spacious and modern en suite bathroom. Alungoo features 27 gers with queen and twin beds with a modern restaurant and pub. It was absolutely stunning to have my breakfast in the outdoor terrace of the restaurant and look out at the mountains and open valley of Terelj National Park. ([www.hoyorzagal.mn](http://www.hoyorzagal.mn))



## Make it Happen

### essentials



#### GETTING THERE

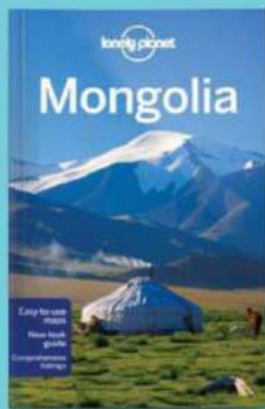
Mongolia's Chinggis Khaan International Airport is located 18 kilometres to the southwest of Ulaanbaatar. Fly from Singapore on Singapore Airlines, with a transfer in Beijing onto MIAT Mongolian Airlines (from US\$1,123; singaporeair.com). From Kuala Lumpur, single carrier flights are available on Korean Air with one stop in Seoul (from US\$805; koreanair.com).

#### GETTING AROUND

Taxis are relatively cheap (from US\$0.40 per kilometre) but language may prove to be a barrier. The city centre is compact enough to explore on foot. If venturing into the outback, 4WDs are available for self-drive or hire with a guide (drivemongolia.com).

#### FURTHER READING

Pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's guide on Mongolia (US\$29.99) for comprehensive information. Individual chapters are available for download from US\$4.95.



The Mongolian wild horse, formally known as Przewalski's horse, was once nearly extinct, but conservation efforts in the 1990s helped stabilise the population at over 1,500. Three hundred were returned to their native Mongolia, and they now reside in national reserves such as Hustai National Park. There are now purportedly 220 wild horses in the park.

We headed to the park, which was a two-hour 95km drive from the city, to track and spot these magnificent animals. Besides wild

horses, the park hosts a spectacular 459 species of vascular plants, 44 species of mammals, 217 species of birds and many more within 50.6ha of land. A UNESCO-certified park under Man and the Biosphere Reserves organisation, Hustai is an advocate of responsible eco tourism and actively engages in research, training and protection programmes.

We were rewarded for our patience; after 15 minutes of driving in the park, we spotted a team of horses that were about to head up towards higher ground. We got out from our van and tracked them. They

spotted us, cautiously lifting their heads to sniff the air. But they did not bolt, allowing us to be silent admirers for a few precious moments. The Bayan Valley is one of the places where wild horses are usually spotted.

Hustai organises seven- to 10-day tours as well as three-day tours within the park. Visitors keen to involve themselves in the community may do so as part of the community tourism programme and participate in daily activities with nomadic families.

[www.hustai.mn](http://www.hustai.mn)







# HEART OF BINTAN

Explore world-class development Lagoi Bay as it newly opens this season







Dedicated to bringing you one of the best resort experiences in the world, Bintan Resorts has expanded its portfolio to seven resorts, four designer golf courses, pristine beaches, delectable restaurants, acclaimed spas and a wide selection of recreational facilities and attractions. Located just 50 minutes away from Singapore via a fast modern catamaran ferry, it is an ideal location for a quick getaway or a leisurely long-term stay.

A haven for luxurious resort stays, Bintan offers new alternatives for a pampering vacation. Besides well-known brands such as Banyan Tree and Club Med Bintan, The Sanchaya is a popular choice among guests who enjoy chic luxury. It comprises a collection of 21 villas and 9 suites, offering guests an extraordinary experience with personalised service and thoughtful attention to detail.

The Sanchaya provides ample activities and guided tours for guests to explore and discover the beautiful island. Croquet and pentanque sessions are available – packages go by the hour and are inclusive of a drink of your choice. For those who wish to work up a sweat, try the Bintan mountain hike or take a bicycle tour to enjoy the panoramic beauty of Bintan Island. Others may prefer to explore the island in a relaxed setting, and we highly recommend you to take the option of a Mangrove Discovery Day and Night Tour. This wholesome experience will take you through the mysteries of Mother Nature within the lush forest during daytime and intriguing glowing fireflies at night.

Lagoi Bay officially opened on 31 May

2015 and is located in the heart of Bintan Resorts. With amenities such as a new shopping mall and a marketplace, visitors will enjoy a pampering stay with a plethora of activities to occupy their time. Plaza Lagoi offers a fine shopping experience with F&B outlets and a food court, tour services, convenience stores, money changer, spas and more. Also in the area is Swiss-Belhotel Lagoi Bay, which welcomed its first guests in March 2015. This sleek and trendy 4-star international hotel offers 195 rooms and is minutes away from the Lagoi Bay beach and Lake Lagoi, offering convenience to guests who wish to enjoy a scenic view of Bintan on board an Air Adventures flight.

Air Adventures is one of the many popular experiences in Bintan, aimed to provide guests with an extraordinary view of the north Bintan coast. The brand

new state-of-the-art ultralight seaplane facility is the first in Southeast Asia and is able to offer flight training as well as tourist introductory flights. Anyone is able to partake in this revolutionary recreational sport and to experience the thrill and excitement of flying in an open cockpit seaplane.

Gourmands will be pleased with the opening of Flyboyz Beach Bar, an integrated Dining & Entertainment Arena that includes three dining and entertainment concepts within one establishment. Recently opened within the Lagoi Bay area, Flyboyz is the ideal beachfront playground for those who enjoy sinful gastronomical delights. The retro watering hole, hoo-bar!, is situated on the second storey with residential DJs spinning classic hits from the '70s to early '90s. In addition, Cuba, the Cuban-themed sky lounge located at Flyboyz's rooftop terrace, is the place to chill under the stars or dance the night away under Bintan's gorgeous starlit skies. The innovative entertainment and dining scene was developed by veteran Singapore entertainers Chris Henson and Mark Van Cuylenberg aka 'The Flying Dutchman'.

Log on to <http://bintan-resorts.com/visitors/> for more information.





# KICK-START IN KERALA

Brace yourself as you embark on an exhilarating journey through Kerala



Houseboat

In the southwest of the Indian continent is Kerala, a coastal state known for its traditional houseboats, sprawling tea plantations and ancient Ayurvedic therapy. Derived from “Keram”, meaning coconut palm, tall and exotic palms can be found throughout this beautiful state. Rivers are the lifeblood of Kerala, with as many as 44 rivers spanning across its grounds. Its famous backwaters are ideal for a leisurely cruise amidst beautiful sights and sounds. Come to this stunning paradise and experience nature at its best.

Hailed as God’s own country, this Indian state boasts a variety of beautiful landscapes, from glistening beaches and lush forests to majestic mountains and humble wetlands. With its abundance of natural wonders, Kerala is fast gaining reputation as the destination of choice for outdoor adventures. Walk on the wild

side and take part in thrilling activities such as paragliding, rock climbing and windsurfing, or get off the beaten path and experience Kerala’s sensational serenity amidst lush rainforests and fresh mountain air.

Southern Kerala is home to the capital Thiruvananthapuram, which boasts internationally renowned beaches and peaceful backwaters. The Kovalam Surf Club on the stunning Kovalam Beach, a famous tourist haunt since the 1930s, offers reasonably priced surf lessons for both adults and children. If you wish to try something different, opt for kite or windsurfing. Slather on some sunscreen and take advantage of Kovalam’s strong seasonal winds with a spot of parasailing along the stunning coastline. Another popular surfing location in Thiruvananthapuram would be Varkala.

Visit Soul and Surf at Golden beach and savour its warm waters and beautiful scenery, while Papanasam Beach’s clear waters are perfect for scuba diving. For more thrills and spills, venture up north to Kannur’s Tejaswini River where you can have a ride of your life rafting down its wild rapids. Slow things down and stop by Thiruvallam backwaters en route to Kovalam where you can canoe and kayak along its peaceful waters and admire the variety of local flora and fauna.

Make a trip to India’s first ecotourism destination, Thenmala, which is 66km east of historic seaport town Kollam. Enjoy a guided trek through the Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary to Palaruvi Waterfalls nearby and witness a variety of landscapes including evergreen forests, muddy swamps and sparse grasslands. Take the unique opportunity to ride in a coracle, a small oval boat used in both India and Wales. If manned



Kovalam Beach Surfing

PHOTOGRAPHS: KERALA TOURISM, SAAD FARUQUE, WINGS AND PETALS, JAKUB MICHANKOW





Munnar  
Tea Plantation

skillfully, these vessels do not disturb the waters or creatures in it. Zip through the canopy on a flying fox or go snorkeling with the family. If you are feeling especially energetic, spend the day mountain biking through rugged terrains, testing your balance and endurance. You could also do some rock climbing or abseiling while enjoying Thenmala's natural wonders. To end the day, hire a pedal boat and take a leisurely ride along the ponds.

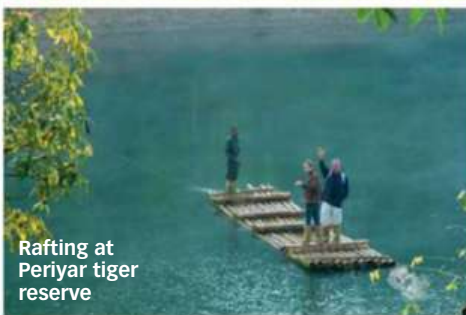
With Kottayam as your point of reference, Kumarakom to the west is another popular destination that offers water activities such as angling and boating in the Vembanad Lake. This great expanse of water spans three districts and is approximately 110km in width. About 19km away from Kottayam is the Aruvikkuzhi Waterfalls. Feast your eyes on the cascading waters while trekking through its rubber plantation grounds. Four hours away by train is Kerala's largest district, Idukki. The Kulamav Dam which is part of the Idukki reservoir is the perfect location for trekking. Head on to Vagamon at the Kottayam-Idukki border of Idukki for an exhilarating paragliding escapade. Take to the skies from Kolahalamedu hill, 4km away from Vagamon and admire its lush meadows and vast tea plantations from above. Travel about three hours by road to Thekkady's Periyar Wildlife sanctuary where you can go bamboo rafting along the lake. When the sun goes down, take part in



Shenduruni  
wildlife  
sanctuary



Paragliding  
at Vagamon



Rafting at  
Periyar tiger  
reserve

the exclusive jungle patrol programme that lets visitors experience regular night patrolling, accompanied by forest guards. Venture to the lush hills and plantations of Munnar, which boasts staggering slopes that will impress rock climbing and abseiling enthusiasts.

Blessed with natural wonders, this coastal state feeds the active and adventurous soul. Stopover in the tropical state of Kerala and get ready for a stimulating and memorable adventure.

### GETTING THERE

To get to Kerala, fly to the capital of Thiruvananthapuram or Kochi. From Singapore to Thiruvananthapuram, fly Emirates or SriLankan Airlines with 1 stop (from US\$1,102; [www.emirates.com](http://www.emirates.com)). Travel direct to Kochi on Singapore Airlines or Tigerair. Alternatively, journey from Kuala Lumpur to Thiruvananthapuram on SriLankan Airlines or Emirates with 1 stop (from US\$448; [www.srilankan.com](http://www.srilankan.com)). To Kochi, fly direct on AirAsia or Malindo Air.

### GETTING AROUND

Enjoy a comfortable ride on a taxi that will ferry you on short distances within cities. A cheaper option would be to hop on an auto rickshaw. For longer journeys between cities, choose from a variety of public or private bus companies that offer affordable rides. Also, a well-connected railway system allows easy access to various parts of the state.

### WHERE TO STAY

- Overlooking the dazzling Kovlam Beach, The Leela offers 194 luxurious guest rooms and suites. This sprawling 5-star property is known for world class dining and impeccable service as well as a variety of outdoor activities including beach volleyball and tennis ([www.theleela.com](http://www.theleela.com); from US\$204.75).
- The Nila Palace Hotel features 19 comfortable rooms and suites with 24-hour room service and internet connectivity. Situated near Thenmala, this hotel offers Ayurveda spa treatments at its in-house spa ([www.nilapalace.com](http://www.nilapalace.com); from US\$31.50 for a single bed).
- Away from the crowded town of Munnar lies The Wind Munnar, offering a selection of cosy cottages with gorgeous hillside views. Located near famous attractions such as the Lockhart Gap, this hotel houses a gourmet restaurant which dishes up authentic Kerala delicacies ([thewindmunnar.com](http://thewindmunnar.com); from US\$78.73).



# BLISSFUL BEACH RETREATS

In addition to its urban cities and countless gastronomic delights, Malaysia is also a paradise of hidden mystical islands, stunning beaches, and bounteous rainforests filled with wildlife waiting to be discovered

WORDS JOSMIN ONG & ADORA WONG



## Private Islands

Unbeknownst to many, Malaysia lays claim to a multitude of private islands that provide havens of comfort and peace for those looking to escape the incessant buzz of daily life. Intimately isolated yet comfortably cradled within the arms of Mother Nature, these glittering islands are perfect for tranquillity seekers and adrenaline-fuelled adventurers alike.





## **BEST FOR AFFLUENT TRAVELLERS**

### **Pangkor Laut Resort**

**📍 Pangkor Laut Island, 32200 Lumut, Perak, Malaysia; tel: +605 699 1100**

Nestled within 2 million years old shady rainforests lays Pangkor Laut Resort, a true representation of exclusivity and luxury. Wholly private-owned, this piece of paradise is home to secluded pristine beaches, emerald clear bays and evening skies woven with warm colours. Combining luxury with natural beauty, the resort is built with warm and contemporary colours that blend into the surrounding forest while enhancing its natural elegance. For a unique dining experience, guests are able to make meal plans with an appointed chef for a personalised and memorable stay. Choices include Japanese dinners in a private Spa Pavilion by the beach or cruise along the seas in a private yacht

with specially crafted picnic basket.

**TOP DRAW:** The award-winning Spa Village Pangkor Laut is an exclusive spa centre, offering healing culture and complete rejuvenation with its abundance of Malay, Chinese, Indian and Thai practices and techniques. The diverse melting pot of people and cultures, coupled with an abundance of natural resources, enable the team at Pangkor Laut to provide a holistic approach the spa and wellness for all guests. One such example would be a Thai Herbal Massage session, within a outdoor spa pavilion



overlooking the sea, as the gentle waves come crashing in, guests will be able to relax to the sounds of the sea and the skilful technique of the masseurs.

**NEARBY:** Avid adventurers can take on the challenge of trekking through the rainforest with our resident naturalist or head out to see for a fishing and snorkelling tour via a motorised boat. There are also luxury yachts available for those who wish to explore the Straits of Malacca or simple cruise along the sea to admire the golden hues of the setting sun.

**PRICE:** From US\$230 per night





# Selangor

**T**he largest and most developed of the 13 states in Malaysia, Selangor's infrastructure and communications facilities are amongst the best in the region. Situated on the west coast of the country, Selangor is home to tropical rainforests and mangroves as well as many places of interest waiting to be discovered.



## BEST FOR FAMILY FUN

### Avani Sepang Goldcoast Resort

**📍 No. 67, Jalan Pantai Bagan Lalang, Kg Bagan Lalang,, 43950 Sungai Pelek Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia; tel: +603 3182 3600**

Famed for its beautiful tropical weather all year round, sun worshippers and beach lovers will enjoy unwinding by the beach or taking a refreshing dip within the resort's infinity pool. Perched on stilts over shallow waters, the resort is designed as a palm feature and holds 315 contemporary Polynesian-inspired guest rooms and villas – ideal for family vacations. Exclusive butler service is available for booking if you wish to enhance your resort experience. Be prepared for a treat as the resort presents five distinctive restaurants to accommodate your every gastronomic fancy, be it local, fusion, western, oriental cuisines, all day international buffets, or barbeque delights.

**TOP DRAW:** Specially catered to travellers of different ages and interests, the AVANI kid's club will occupy the little ones with a day of action-packed programs, leaving parents free to pamper themselves with an AVANI SPA treatments in a calm and stress-free environment. Extreme Park, an on-site activity centre, is ideal for hours of family fun where guests are able to enjoy some competitive action such as go-karting and paint ball.

**NEARBY:** Nature lovers are able to get up close and personal with the gentle giants in the Kuala Gandah Elephant Sanctuary or take the opportunity to see some wildlife on a mangrove river cruise. Cultural travellers can book a guided tour to explore the historic state of Malacca, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and visit exquisite temples, handicraft local markets and rural villages.

**PRICE:** From US\$138 per night



PHOTOGRAPHS: AVANI SEPANG GOLDCOAST RESORT



## BEST FOR EVERYTHING-IN-ONE

### Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa

**1 Persiaran Lagoon, Bandar Sunway, 47500 Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia; tel: +603 7492 8000**

Conveniently located 35 minutes from Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa remains a favourite amongst travellers for its prime postal code; most of the city's best amenities and attractions are within close walking distance, while the resort itself is located within the integrated Sunway Resort City. The resort offers a collection of 439 guestrooms and suites with a stunning view of either the Sunway Lagoon or

the resort's skyline. These contemporary rooms are equipped with modern amenities, but for a timeless Asian ambiance, stay in one of the 17 Asian-styled pool villas nestled within the resort's tropical garden for a unique vacation like no other.

**TOP DRAW:** For the workout junkies, spend some time sweating it out in the fitness centre or take a swim in the oversized free-form landscaped swimming pool with cascading waterfall within the hotel. If you are seeking a rejuvenation session, book a spa treatment with the Mandara Spa to enhance your travel experience, as the masseuse skilfully releases your tension via Balinese or Thai massage techniques.

**NEARBY:** With all the attractions within walking distance, there is a plethora of activities in this tiny paradise. The massive 88-acre Sunway Lagoon multi-park offers over 80 rides and attractions spread across

five signature parks, including a water park that is home to one of the world's largest manmade beaches ideal for surfing, wakeboarding and skateboarding. Guests will lose themselves in Sunway Pyramid Shopping Mall as it offers over 900 specialty stores, including fashion and lifestyle stores, food and beverages outlets and other recreational facilities such as ice skating and bowling.

**PRICE:** From US\$116 per night







# Penang

Once referred to as the Pearl of the Orient, Penang – or Pulau Pinang – was so named for its abundance of areca nut palms scattered across its pristine beaches. Today, it has managed to retain its exotic beauty in the midst of its transformation into a highly urbanised and industrialised city, and remains a popular tourist destination for its bustling art scene, mouth-watering cuisines, multicultural heritage, and colonial architecture.

## BEST FOR MUSIC ENTHUSIASTS Hard Rock Hotel Penang

**i Batu Ferringhi Beach, 11100  
Penang, Malaysia; tel: +604 881 1711**

This modern and trendy beachfront resort boasts a collection of 250 guestrooms and suites, fully equipped with sensual branded bedding, 32-inch LCD TVs with complimentary blockbuster movies on demand, and iPod docking stations for endless entertainment. Also within the resort is the spectacular 26,000 square foot free-form swimming pool that is the largest in Penang. The world-renowned

Hard Rock Café presents a line-up of six food and beverage outlets within the resort that offer a range of international, authentic American, Asian, and Italian cuisines. For a true experience like no other resort in the world, experience first-hand

**TOP DRAW:** Hard Rock is synonymous



with music, good food and entertainment – there will never be a dull moment staying in Hard Rock Hotel with its abundance of entertainment options and nightly live band performances. Music enthusiasts will be more than ecstatic to learn the revolution of music through the faces of music, fashion and arts of the memorabilia walls within the hotel. Party people, be sure to stay for the Ultimate Foam Party, an unforgettable experience available every first Saturday of the month.

**NEARBY:** Take a complimentary boat ride out to Batu Ferringhi night market for some local shopping and treats. As Jalan Batu Ferringhi comes alive every night with vendors setting up their stalls along the stretch of the beach, be prepared to bargain for the best rates on your souvenirs.

**PRICE:** From US\$96 per night

PHOTOGRAPHS: HARD ROCK HOTEL PENANG



## BEST FOR GOURMET LOVERS

### Shangri-La's Rasa Sayang Resort & Spa

**1** Batu Ferringhi, 111000 Penang, Malaysia; tel: +604 888 8888

Weld two hearts with the all-consuming warmth of amaranthine ardour at the resort's fairytale-life garden swept with luxuriant century-old trees, or at the breezy blue seafront of Batu Ferringgi Beach for a wedding even the fairies will approve of. The posh resort houses 304 rooms and suites, with its Rasa Wing comprising some rooms with a private veranda and garden and some with a balcony fitted out with a private soaking tub. When not delighting in a rubdown together at the ocean-fronted CHI Spa, which consists of 11 private spa villas

that employ traditional Asia healing philosophies, get vigorous with your true love at the health club, the tennis court, or the golf course.

**TOP DRAW:** Gourmands will be pleased with the selection of world-class dining options – Ferringgi Grill serves modern grill cuisine and vintage wines, Spice Market Café offers a buffet spread of authentic Chinese, Indian, Peranakan, Japanese and Thai flavours, and Pinang restaurant and Bra dishes up easy eats with a picturesque view of the sea and the mountains on its timber deck.

**NEARBY:** The resort is a 20-minute drive to the heritage-rich and architecturally renowned Georgetown, which encompasses a slew of historical buildings and religious sites, and neighbours Penang Hill and Kek Lok Si. It is also near Snake Temple, home to a variety of pit vipers believed to be harmless because of the sacred incense smoke.

**PRICE:** From US\$390 per night





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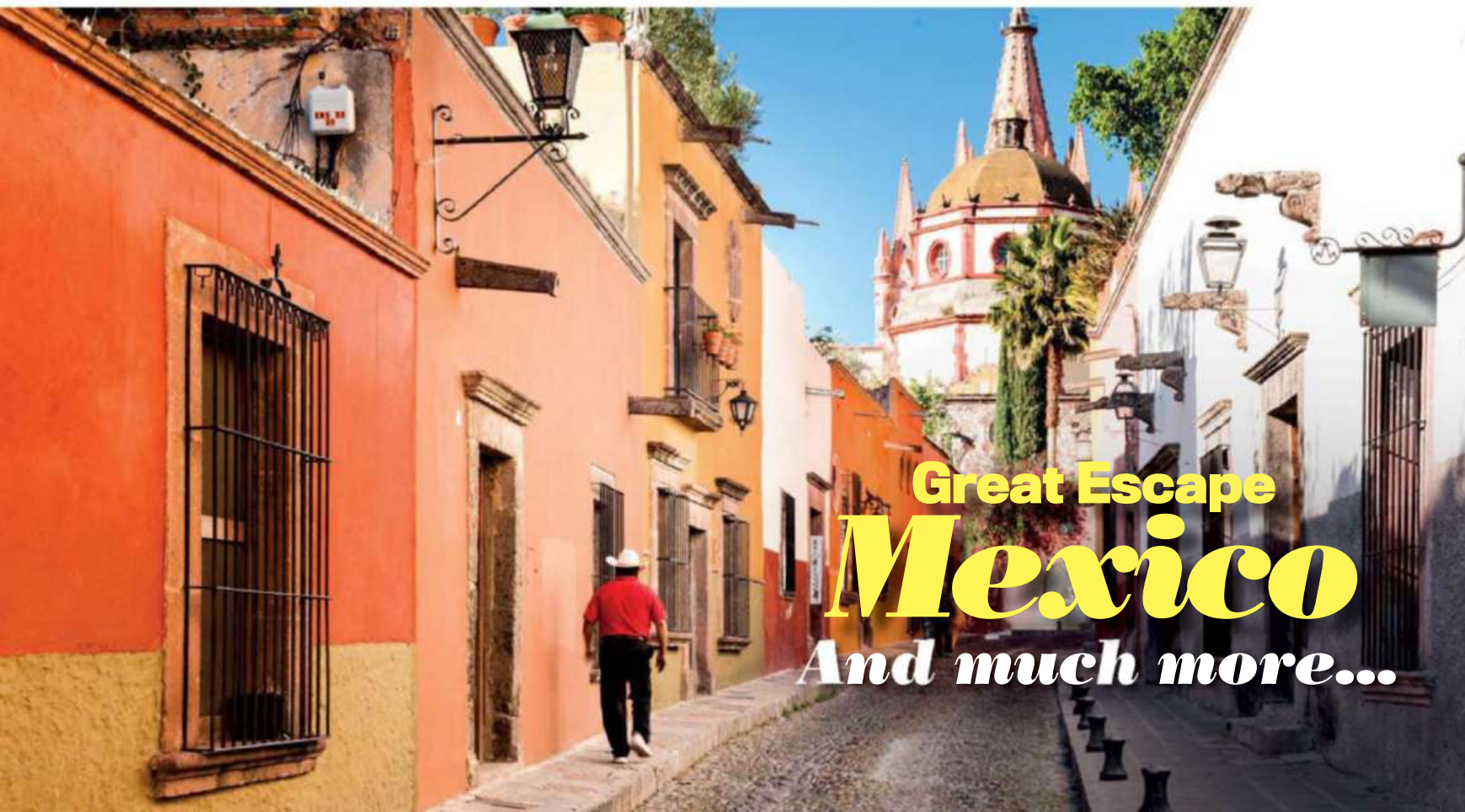


A photograph of a church with a dark roof and a small steeple, situated on a grassy hill. The scene is captured at sunset or sunrise, with a soft, colorful sky in shades of pink, orange, and blue. The church is reflected in a body of water in the foreground.

***Next  
month  
Revealed!***

# **Visions of Beauty**

Where is the world's most beautiful place?  
An eclectic mix of experts, from architect Zaha  
Hadid to illustrator Quentin Blake, share their  
very personal suggestions



**Great Escape**  
***Mexico***  
***And much more...***



# Mini Guides



Enjoy the Big Apple on a budget, with free attractions, and museums and affordable eats



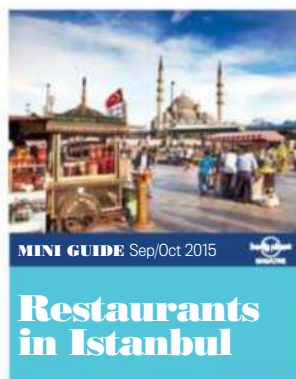
Trawl the eclectic mix of avant-garde art and exotic native produce in Melbourne



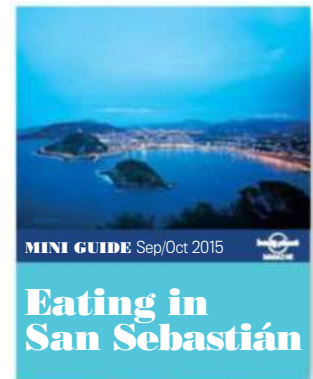
Belgium's second city is deservedly famous for its bars, music venues and nightclubs



Experience the best of the city's heritage and lifestyle away from the tourist crowds



The city astride two continents is one of the world's great food destinations



Tot up the Michelin stars or go on a pintxos crawl in this food-obsessed town in northern Spain

FROM YOUR  
MAGAZINE TO  
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TEAR the guide out along the perforations...



2  
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Early evening ice  
creams and a view of  
Manhattan from  
Brooklyn Bridge Park



MINI GUIDE Sep/Oct 2015



# New York on a budget

Cutting costs doesn't have to mean missing out in NYC: in fact, you can discover plenty of under-the-radar museums and attractions without spending a cent, plus dine out on the best traditional American comfort food.

## Eats

### ✕ NATHAN'S FAMOUS ①

The hot dog was born in Coney Island, which means it's practically obligatory to eat a frankfurter here. Nathan's Famous has been around since 1916. The beef hot dogs are the real deal – and can be topped with chilli, cheese, sauerkraut, red onions or salsa. The clam bar is tops in summer (nathansfamous.com; 1310 Surf Ave cnr Stillwell Ave; daily until late; dogs from US\$3.50).



Fries and a cheeseburger keep things simple at Burger Joint

### ✕ EARL'S BEER & CHEESE ②

Chef Corey Cova's tiny comfort food outpost serves craft beers with a handful of reinvented American classics: basic grilled cheese is served with pork belly, fried egg and kimchi, while mac 'n' cheese sees goat's cheese married with rosemary and chicken (earlsny.com; 1259 Park Ave btwn 97th & 98th Sts; 4pm–midnight Mon–Tue, 11am–midnight Wed–Thu & Sun, 11am–2am Fri–Sat; dishes from US\$6).

### ✕ BURGER JOINT ③

With only a small neon burger as a clue, this speakeasy burger place loiters behind a curtain in the lobby of the Le Parker Meridien hotel. It's a thumping scene of graffiti-strewn walls and the menu is no-fuss: hamburger or cheeseburger, with your choice of garnishes. There's another branch on 8th Street (burgerjointny.com; 119 W 56th St; 11am–11.30pm Sun–Thu, until midnight Fri–Sat; hamburger US\$8.50).

## Experiences

### 🍷 BROOKLYN BREWERY ④

Harkening back to a time when this area was a beer brewing centre, the Brooklyn Brewery not only brews tasty local suds, but offers free tours of its facilities on weekends. For those who want to quaff while waiting for their 30-minute tour to begin, there is a selection of reasonably priced brews on tap (brooklynbrewery.com; 79 N 11th St btwn Berry St & Wythe Ave; beer US\$4.68).



Manhattan's Financial District behind the Staten Island Ferry

### 🚢 STATEN ISLAND FERRY ⑤

These hulking orange boats are those rarest of public transport finds: 24-hour, free of charge and wonderfully scenic. Although this ferry trip across five miles of New York's harbour to the leafy southern borough of Staten Island is aimed at commuters, it offers fine views of the Statue of Liberty and the Manhattan skyline on its 25-minute crossing (siferry.com; leaves Manhattan's Whitehall/ South Ferry Terminal mostly on the hour and half-hour).

### ★ SUMMERSTAGE ⑥

With more than 100 performances spread across 17 parks in the five boroughs, SummerStage is NYC's biggest free performing arts festival. Running from June to August each year, the festival is a chance to see some of the best musicians, dancers and spoken word artists from the city and the rest of the world without spending a dime (cityparksfoundation.org; many performances at Rumsey Playfield, enter Central Park on 69th St and 5th Ave).

## Sights

### 🎨 FISHER LANDAU CENTER FOR ART ⑦

This private art museum, which was co-designed by late British architect Max Gordon, is a must for fans of modern and contemporary art. On any given visit you can expect to catch important works from some of the most iconic artists of the 20th and 21st centuries (flicart.org; 38–27 30th St, Long Island City; noon–5pm Thu–Mon; free).

### 🎨 STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM ⑧

This small but vigorous museum and cultural centre exhibits the works of African American artists, including pieces by the likes of painter Jacob Lawrence, photographer Gordon Parks and collagist Romare Bearden (studiomuseum.org; 144 W 125th St at Adam Clayton Powell Jr Blvd; noon–9pm Thu–Fri, 10am–6pm Sat, noon–6pm Sun; suggested donation US\$7, free on Sundays).



Granite arches give a distinctive profile to Brooklyn Bridge

### 🌉 BROOKLYN BRIDGE ⑨

Completed in 1883, this Gothic Revival masterpiece has inspired poetry (Jack Kerouac's Brooklyn Bridge Blues), music (Frank Sinatra's Brooklyn Bridge) and plenty of art (Walker Evans's photography). The bridge is also the most scenic way to get from southern Manhattan to Brooklyn Heights (about 20 minutes): the walkway that begins just east of City Hall affords a wonderful view of lower Manhattan.

TURN OVER FOR MAP AND NUMBER LOCATIONS



## MINI GUIDE

### New York on a budget

🍷 Drinking ☆ Entertainment 📍 Sights & Activities ✂ Eating 🛏 Where to stay



## New York essentials

### HOW TO GET AROUND

New York's JFK airport has flights from Singapore on Singapore Airlines with one stop at Frankfurt (US\$1,811.25; singaporeair.com). Fly from Kuala Lumpur to JFK on Emirates with one stop (from US\$978.30; emirates.com). Many will need to get an ESTA before travelling to the United States (esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta). A subway or local bus fare is US\$2.65, or US\$2.35 if using a pay-per-ride MetroCard (mta.info). Licensed taxi fares start at US\$2.35 and a trip into Manhattan from JFK airport should cost around US\$55.

### WHERE TO STAY

- 1 Made up of two adjoining 19th-century townhouses, the Chelsea Inn has small but comfortable rooms that look like they were furnished entirely from flea markets or raiding grandma's attic (chelseainn.com; 46 West 17th St; from US\$179.58).
- 2 A cheery, modern spot, Aloft New York Brooklyn is walking distance from the sights in Cobble



A bi-level library in neo-hunting-lodge style at the Gild Hall

Hill and Carroll Gardens, with 176 simple rooms and a dizzying rooftop lounge, open to 4am on weekends (aloftnewyorkbrooklyn.com; 216 Duffield St; from US\$203).

- 3 Boutique and brilliant, Gild Hall, just north of Wall Street, has warmly hued rooms complemented by glass-walled balconies, Sferra linens and mini-bars stocked with Dean & DeLuca snacks (thompsonhotels.com; 15 Gold St; from US\$312.32).

## The know-how

### LATINO FOOD-TRUCK CRAWL ON QUEENS' ROOSEVELT AVENUE

#### ● El Coyote Dormilon

Super-fresh quesadillas are the speciality – try the distinctive huitlacoche (mushroom) and quesillo (cow's milk string cheese) combo (Roosevelt Ave btwn Benham & Aske St).

#### ● Hornado Ecuatoriano

If you dare, try the guatita – a steamy Ecuadorian dish of tender tripe cooked in a mild, curry-style peanut sauce (Warren St at Roosevelt Ave).

#### ● El Guayaquileño

Famous for its Ecuadorian fish stew made of tuna, yuca and toasted corn kernels (Warren St btwn Roosevelt Ave & 40th Rd).



#### ● Maravillas

Head to this restaurant's sidewalk counter and ask for an El Pastor or an Arabes, both types of taco (37–64 90th St at Roosevelt Ave).

### FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's New York City (£14.99), Discover New York City (US\$21.99) and Pocket New York City (US\$13.99) are all useful guides, with the last being ideal for short trips. Find out what's going on in the city's parks at nycgovparks.org.

COMPILED BY NATALIE MILLMAN, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CRISTIAN BONETTO, CAROLINA A. MIRANDA AND BRANDON PRESSER. PHOTOGRAPHS: SIVAN ASKAYO, JAMES KIRKIS/SUPERSTOCK, SHUTTERSTOCK, MICHAEL WEBER PHOTOGRAPHY





MINI GUIDE Sep/Oct 2015

lonely planet  
MAGAZINE

# Exploring the best of Melbourne

Trawl the eclectic mix of avant-garde art and sample exotic native produce in Melbourne

## Shopping

### ▲ EMPORIUM MELBOURNE 1

Open for just a little over a year, Emporium Melbourne is the city's latest shopping mecca, featuring more than 150 fashion, lifestyle and beauty specialty stores. Located in the heart of the city, the precinct houses local and international designers, concept and flagship stores ([emporiummelbourne.com.au](http://emporiummelbourne.com.au); 287 Lonsdale Street; 10am-7pm Sat to Wed, 10am-9pm Thurs & Fri).



An international hub of fashion, lifestyle and beauty at Emporium

### ▲ MELBOURNALIA 2

You'd be forgiven for running a mile from a souvenir shop, but at Melbournalia, you'll find everything from apparel and jewellery to books and artwork made by the city's freshest design talent. A jar of Melbourne City Rooftop Honey and W Class Tram prints are just the beginning of what's on offer ([melbournalia.com.au](http://melbournalia.com.au); Shop 5, 50 Bourke Street; 10am-7pm Mon to Thurs, 10am-8pm Fri, 11am-6pm Sat & Sun).

### ▲ CHAPEL STREET 3

Stretching from the suburbs of Windsor to South Yarra in Melbourne's south east, Chapel Street offers an eclectic mix of designer labels, high street stores and second hand sanctuaries. Don't miss Bromley & Co for avant-garde art, homewares and a sprinkling of fashion ([chapelstreet.com.au](http://chapelstreet.com.au)).

## Restaurants

### ✕ ATTICA 4

In 2015, Attica in the suburb of Ripponlea was the only restaurant in Australia to make it into San Pellegrino's The World's 50 Best Restaurants. Owner and Executive Chef Ben Shewry curates a modern Australian degustation menu, specialising in native ingredients such as salted red kangaroo and bunya bunya ([attica.com.au](http://attica.com.au); 74 Glen Eira Road; dinner Tue to Sat; US\$161.50 or US\$102.87 for Chef's Table menu on Tues).



Attica features native produce for its modern Australian menu

### ✕ BOTHERAMBO 5

In recent years, modern Asian cuisine as exploded in Melbourne. New to Richmond, a stone's throw away from the MCG, is Botherambo, which nails its south-east Asian brief in a distinctly Melbourne setting. Enjoy pre dinner drinks in the bar on one side before moving into the restaurant on the other ([botherambo.com.au](http://botherambo.com.au); 65 Swan Street; Sun to Thurs 12pm-11pm, Fri & Sat 12pm-1am; share plates from US\$8.82).

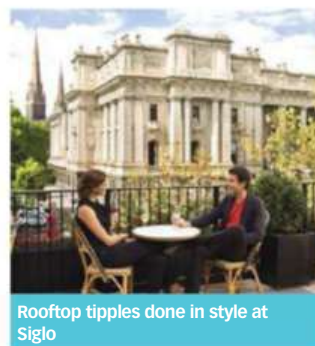
### ✕ ENTRECOTE 6

Entrecote in the inner city suburb of South Yarra is inspired by Paris' Le Relais De L'Entrecote that serves just one dish – steak and frites. Sitting pretty across from the Royal Botanic Gardens, the Parisian steakhouse and café is also open for breakfast and is the ideal spot for a glass of Mumm and Croque Monsieur ([entrecote.com.au](http://entrecote.com.au); 131-133 Domain Road; daily 7am-midnight; steak and frites US\$29.32).

## A bar, brunch and gelato

### ✕ SIGLO 7

Melbourne is renowned for its rooftop bars and Siglo in the city takes the cake. Located on the rooftop of The European and iconic The Melbourne Supper Club, the open air bar's expansive terrace looks out over Parliament House and St Patrick's Cathedral ([theeuropean.com.au](http://theeuropean.com.au); Level 2, 161 Spring Street; daily 5pm until late; cocktails US\$14.70).



Rooftop tipples done in style at Siglo

### ✕ THE KETTLE BLACK 8

The Kettle Black in South Melbourne is the new face of brunch in Melbourne, which since opening in July 2014, has had queues out the door. Located across from Albert Park Lake, the café's interior is sleek and light, and the food sophisticated yet approachable. The crayfish roll is a must ([thekettleblack.com.au](http://thekettleblack.com.au); 50 Albert Road; Mon to Fri 7am-4pm, Sat & Sun 8am-4pm; brunch from US\$5.50).

### ✕ GELATO MESSINA 9

You might think you're in Italy for a minute upon stepping into Gelato Messina. With stores in Fitzroy and Richmond, you'll find over 40 flavours of gelato – 35 permanent flavours and five weekly specials. Best of all, everything is made fresh in their kitchens. ([gelatomessina.com.au](http://gelatomessina.com.au); 237 Smith Street, Fitzroy & 164 Swan Street, Richmond; daily 12pm-11pm; from US\$3.53 a scoop).

TURN OVER FOR MAP AND NUMBER LOCATIONS



## MINI GUIDE

### Exploring the best of Melbourne

🛍 Shopping ✂ Eating 🛏 Where to stay



## Melbourne essentials

### T TRANSPORT

Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport can be reached from Singapore direct with Emirates, Jetstar, Qantas and Singapore Airlines. From Kuala Lumpur, fly with Air Asia X, Emirates or Malaysia Airlines. Melbourne's airport is 15 miles from downtown: travel into the city by shuttle bus (US\$17 to Southern Cross Station) or taxi (about US\$40.75).

The public transport system (trains, trams and buses) is privatised: the myki ticket is a smartcard that can be used across the network. A daily ticket for Zone 1, sufficient for most visitors, costs US\$6.80 (ptv.vic.gov.au).

### 🛏 WHERE TO STAY

1 Complete with a bistro, bar and roof top retreat, South Melbourne's **The Coppersmith** has just 15 beautifully appointed rooms. You can even customise your mini bar upon booking. (coppersmithhotel.com.au; 435 Clarendon Street; rooms from US\$161.65).



Stylish interiors that reflect the artistic sensibilities of The Olsen

2 The Olsen on Chapel Street, South Yarra is one of four Art Series hotels in Melbourne. Featuring art by the hotel's namesake, Dr John Olsen, The Olsen even has its own in-house art curator. (artserieshotels.com.au; 637-641 Chapel Street; rooms from US\$182.95).

3 Tucked away in a leafy residential street in South Yarra, the **Lyall Hotel**'s spacious accommodation features little luxuries including underfloor heating in the bathrooms and private terraces (thelyall.com; 14 Murphy St; from US\$356.50).

## The know-how



### MELBOURNE CHEFS TO TAKE HOME

- The Cook's Companion - One of Australia's most well-thumbed cookbooks, from one of the city's most influential chefs
- Chin Chin: The Book - The secrets (and recipes) behind Melbourne's most queued for modern Asian, laneway restaurant.
- Flavours of Melbourne - Discover all of Melbourne's best restaurants and bars in the city in one.
- The Huxtaburger Book: The Art and Science of the Perfect Burger - All you need to know to make

the ultimate burger.

• Scott Picket: A Cook's Story - Part autobiography, part cookbook from owner and chef of Estelle and Saint Crispin.



### FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's Melbourne & Victoria (US\$21.99) has a comprehensive chapter on Melbourne, which is available to download at lonelyplanet.com (US\$4.95). The Broadsheet Melbourne reviews places to eat and drink (broadsheet.com.au).

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The Gothic  
Onze-Lieve-  
Vrouwekathedraal

**MINI GUIDE** Sep/Oct 2015



# Nightlife in Antwerp

Belgium's second city has long been famed for its historic port and trade in diamonds, but it's now basking in a third 'Golden Age' that has made it one of Europe's most exciting clubbing and nightlife hot spots.

## Pubs & cafés

### 1 OUD ARSENAAL

Little has changed since 1924 at this congenially old-fashioned 'brown café' (named for the dark-wood interiors) in the city centre, attracting locals with exceptionally reasonable beer prices, brew of the month and guest ales. The only drawback is that it closes early, particularly at weekends (Maria Pijpelincxstraat 4; 10am–10pm Wed–Fri, 7.30am–7.30pm Sat & Sun).



De Vagant specialises in Belgian and French gins and liqueurs

### 2 DE VAGANT

More than 200 jenever (gins) are served in this cosy bare-boards local café, including herbal, fruity, creamy and nutty infusions, plus beer and wine. You can also buy bottles of jenever across the road from its bottle shop, which resembles an old-style pharmacy. Bear in mind the average alcohol content of these drinks is 40 per cent (devagant.be; Reyndersstraat 25; 11am–late Mon–Sat, from 12pm Sun).

### 3 BIERHUIS KULMINATOR

This is a classic, and eccentric, pub in the city centre that offers a gargantuan 30-page menu of 700 mostly Belgian brews, including notably rare 'vintage' bottles that are laid down to mature for several (sometimes up to 30) years like fine wine. The cluttered décor adds to the quirky atmosphere (Vleminckveld 32; 4pm–midnight Tue–Sat, 8pm–midnight Mon, closed Sun).

## Clubs

### ★ CAFÉ LOCAL 4

This is a popular, friendly club in trendy 't Zuid, with a range of events on different nights of the week. Paradise Saturdays are the main draw – a themed party, with deck chairs, gadgets, sweets and shots, while on the first Sunday of each month the music takes a salsa-merengue turn (cafelocal.be; Waalsekaai 25; 10pm–late Wed–Sun, see website for daily opening times; cover from US\$9.37).



Red & Blue's events are often themed and have a dress code

### ★ RED & BLUE 5

This is a great dance venue located north of the city centre, with a decent-sized yet still intimate dance floor. It's best known for the Saturday gay night (men only), while Thursdays are student night, Fridays sees a mixed crowd enjoying the house music, and on some Sundays there are retro '70s-style discos (redandblue.be; Lange Schipperskapelstraat 11–13; 11pm–7am Thu–Sat; US\$15.62, free before midnight on some nights).

### ★ PARK AVENUE 6

Park Avenue is a lively karaoke joint where the large selection of songs is listed by language, including English. Situated right in the historic heart of Antwerp, just to the north of the cathedral, it's a good place to visit after a few drinks in the city centre bars. After midnight on Saturdays – and also on some Fridays – Park Avenue morphs into a small, friendly disco with a variety of guest DJs (Kaastrui 3; 9pm–5am daily).

## Live music

### ★ DE ROMA 7

In the suburb of Borgerhout, this classic 1928 cinema has been meticulously restored and shows off-beat films (often in English) on most nights of the week. It also acts as a cultural centre with a varied programme of exhibitions and concerts – including jazz and world music (deroma.be; Turnhoutsebaan 286; see website for up-to-date listings; tickets from US\$15.62).



The Trix features mini festivals and three live concert halls

### ★ TRIX 8

This out-of-town venue focuses on alternative and up-and-coming bands plus club DJs. Big names come too (Snoop Dogg in 2009, John Mayall in 2012), while this year has varied offerings including '80s band Echo & the Bunnymen, online phenomenon Tyler Ward and the 'sheikh of Syrian wedding music' Omar Souleyman (trixonline.be; Noordersingel 28–30, Borgerhout; tickets from US\$15.62).

### ★ DE MUZE 9

This appealing, dimly lit, triple-level jazz café in the city centre has an maze-like interior and is popular with both locals and tourists. It hosts great live jazz (when drink prices increase), which ranges from up-and-coming artists to old hands seven nights per week – see the website for full programme details (jazzmuze.be; Melkmarkt 15; 1pm–4am; entrance to jazz performances often free).

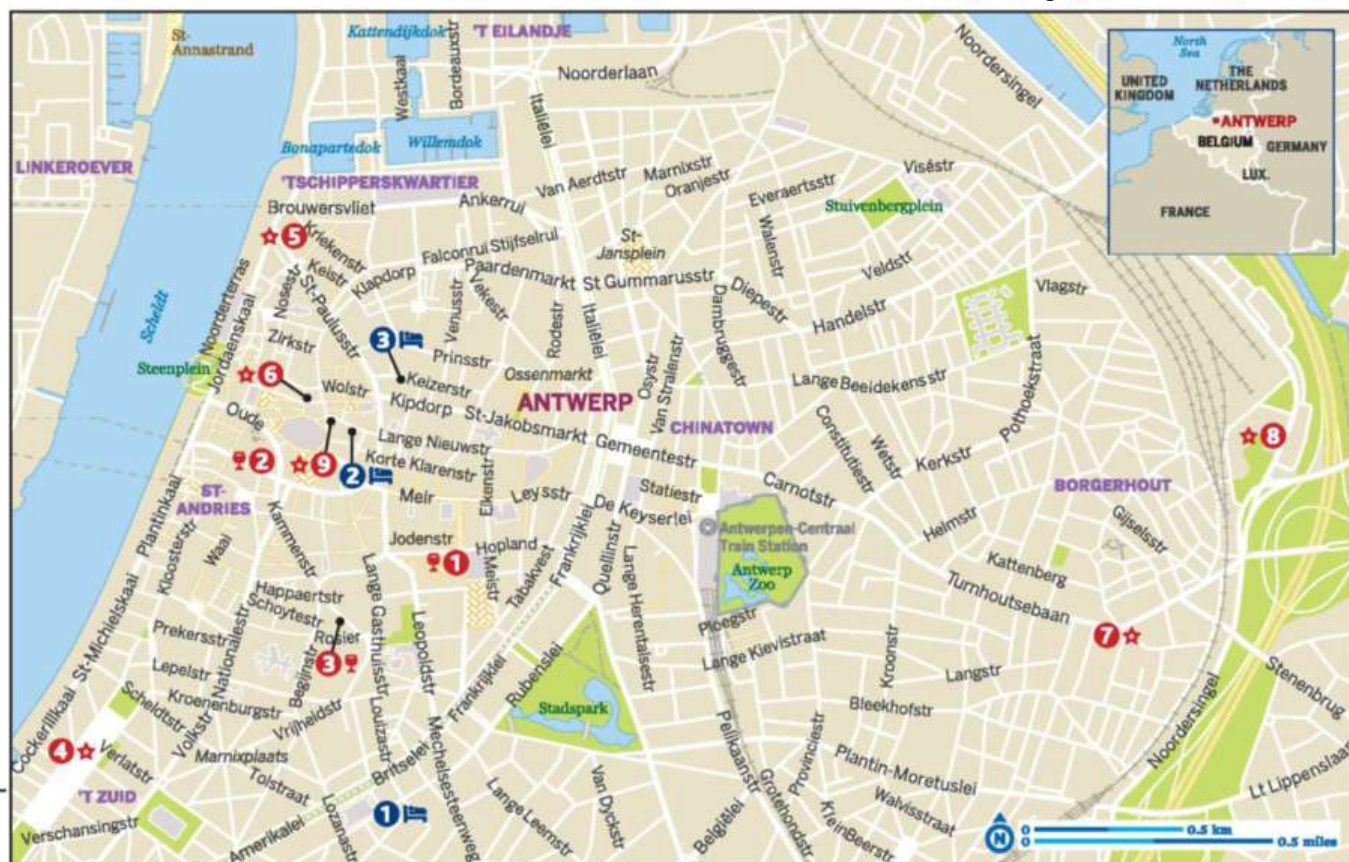
TURN OVER FOR MAP AND NUMBER LOCATIONS



## MINI GUIDE

### Nightlife in Antwerp

🍷 Drinking ★ Entertainment 🛏 Where to stay



## Antwerp essentials

### T TRANSPORT

Air France flies from Singapore and Kuala Lumpur to Antwerp with two stops (from US\$2,488.15; [airfrance.com](http://airfrance.com)). The tiny airport is located 2½ miles southeast of the centre. The city's extensive red bike system works very smoothly (day pass from US\$4.68; [velo-antwerpen.be](http://velo-antwerpen.be)). On public transport the same tickets are valid for all buses, trams and premetro (underground trams).

### 🛏 WHERE TO STAY

① In a 1905, Belle-Epoque-style townhouse, Bed, Bad & Brood has three rooms with parquet floors, high ceilings, stained glass, marble carvings and an appealing feeling of spaciousness for a b&b within this low price range ([bbantwerp.com](http://bbantwerp.com); Justitiestraat 43; from US\$ 93.70).

② Hotel Julien is a boutique mansion-hotel occupying two 16th-century townhouses. Rooms feature carrara marble, underfloor heating, Moroccan



Hotel Julien's terrace overlooks Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekathedraal

plasterwork and fresh orchids, while some also have exposed beams or old brick-tile floors. There's a swish new wellness centre and rooftop terrace, too ([hotel-julien.com](http://hotel-julien.com); Korte Nieuwstraat 24; from US\$265.47).  
③ Considered the best hotel in town, the De Witte Lelie Hotel occupies three 17th-century mansions built around a central courtyard, with 10 luxurious rooms – each individually furnished and equipped with a free mini bar ([dewittelelie.be](http://dewittelelie.be); Keizerstraat 16–18; from US\$469).

## The know-how

### IN FASHION

● Antwerp's renown as a **hub of world fashion** dates back to the late 1980s, when daring and provocative shows in London and Paris launched the reputations of six graduates from the city's Royal Academy.

● The most commercially known of the 'Antwerp Six' is **Dries Van Noten**, while conceptual artist-cum-designer **Walter Van Beirendonck** specialises in futuristic club wear (below). **Ann Demeulemeester** designs favour monochromes, and **Marina Yee** is known for reconstructing garments from secondhand items.

● In the space of a few central streets you'll find dozens of **designer boutiques**, along with many secondhand shops.  
● Visit [fashioninantwerp.be](http://fashioninantwerp.be) for in-depth info, and download its Fashion in Antwerp app.

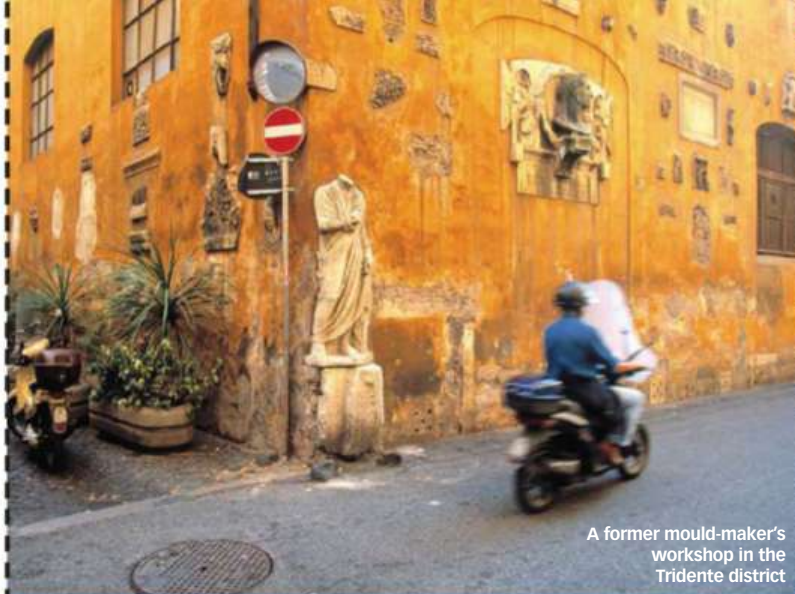


### FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's *Belgium & Luxembourg* (US\$24.99) has a chapter on Antwerp & Eastern Flanders, which is available to download at [lonelyplanet.com](http://lonelyplanet.com) (US\$4.95). See [visitantwerpen.be](http://visitantwerpen.be) for up-to-date local advice and events listings.

COMPILED BY NATALIE MILLMAN, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MARK ELLIOTT; PHOTOGRAPHS: YVES DELPORT, DPA PICTURE ALLIANCE ARCHIVE/ALAMY, FLIPPROF'S BE, GÜNTER GRAFENHAIN/4 CORNERS, LUC VIATOUR





A former mould-maker's workshop in the Tridente district

MINI GUIDE Sep/Oct 2015



# Hidden corners of Rome

Its artistic heritage, history and food have long drawn the crowds, but you can still find pockets that are off most tourists' radars.

## Museums & galleries

### SCUDERIE PAPALI AL QUIRINALE 1

While the city's big museums are mainly left to out-of-towners, temporary exhibitions are eagerly supported by locals. Top locations include the magnificent Scuderie Papali al Quirinale, which runs an exhibition of the life and work of Frida Kahlo this summer (scuderiequirinale.it; Via XXIV Maggio 16; see website for varying opening time; US\$15.62).



A Frida Kahlo self-portrait at the Scuderie Papali al Quirinale

### CHIOSTRO DEL BRAMANTE 2

Tucked away in the back streets near Piazza Navona, the Chiostro del Bramante is a masterpiece of High Renaissance architecture, now used to stage temporary art exhibitions and cultural events. It currently hosts works by Alma-Tadema and Pre-Raphaelite painters (chiostrodelbramante.it; Arco della Pace 5; 10am–8pm Mon–Fri, until 9pm Sat–Sun; tickets US\$17.18).

### MUSEO MISSIONARIO DI PROPAGANDA FIDE 3

This little-visited museum houses an eclectic collection of items brought back from the Vatican's overseas missions, and some of the extraordinary gifts the Pope has received over the years. There's also the chance to peer into its wooden, Hogwarts-like library (museopropagandafide.va; Via di Propaganda 1; 2.30pm–6pm Mon, Wed, Fri; US\$10.15).

## Sights

### CITTÀ DELL'ACQUA 4

Escape the crowds at the Trevi Fountain and search out the Città dell'Acqua, a little-known archaeological site where you can poke around ancient waterworks and an excavated Roman street. Items discovered during the excavations are displayed in a small museum (archeodomani.com; Vicolo del Puttarello 25; 11am–5.30pm Wed–Fri, until 7pm Sat–Sun; US\$3.90).



Gino Coppedè's Villino delle Fate in the Quartiere Coppedè

### QUARTIERE COPPEDÈ 5

Hidden among the elegant palazzi that flank Viale Regina Margherita is the Quartiere Coppedè, a tiny neighbourhood of fairytale buildings and monuments, sculptures and palm-fringed gardens created by little-known Florentine architect Gino Coppedè between 1913 and 1926. At its heart is the whimsical Piazza Mincio and the Fontana delle Rane (Fountain of the Frogs), a modern take on the better known Fontana delle Tartarughe in the Jewish Ghetto.

### VILLA ADA 6

The most famous park in Rome is Villa Borghese, containing the city's zoo, its largest modern art gallery and the Etruscan museum. But locals often head to Villa Ada to the northeast – a big rambling space with shady paths, lakes, lawns and woods. Once the private property of King Vittorio Emanuele III, Villa Ada explodes to life in summer when outdoor concerts are staged during the Roma Incontro il Mondo festival (entrances at Via Salaria and Via Ponte Salario).

## Eating & drinking

### PASTICCERIA CAVALLETTI 7

There is no shortage of pastry shops in Rome, but few can compare to the Pasticceria Cavalletti. Locals claim it makes the best millefoglie (thousand layer cake) in town. Out near Villa Ada, it's a bit of a hike to get to, but the creamy confections are ample reward (pasticceriacavalletti.it; Via Nemorense 179–181; 9am–7.30pm, closed Tue).



Velavevodetto ai Quiriti's menu excels in Roman pasta dishes

### I PORCHETTONI 8

East of the centre, Pigneto is emerging as Rome's nuovo-hip district, undergoing a rapid metamorphosis from the working-class quarter it has been for decades. Feast on porchetta (pork roasted with herbs), mozzarella, earthy cured meats and simple pastas at I Porchettoni, a lively place popular with students (iporchettoni.it; Via del Pigneto 68; lunch and dinner; meals around US\$31.23).

### VELAVEVODETTO AI QUIRITI 9

Away from the overpriced eateries around the Vatican, the Prato neighbourhood has a far more local vibe. This newcomer to the area offers unpretentious food including Roman staples such as carciofini (artichokes), polpetta di bollito (fried meatballs) and veal saltimbocca (ristorantevelavevodetto.it; Piazza dei Quiriti 4/5; lunch and dinner; mains from US\$15.62).

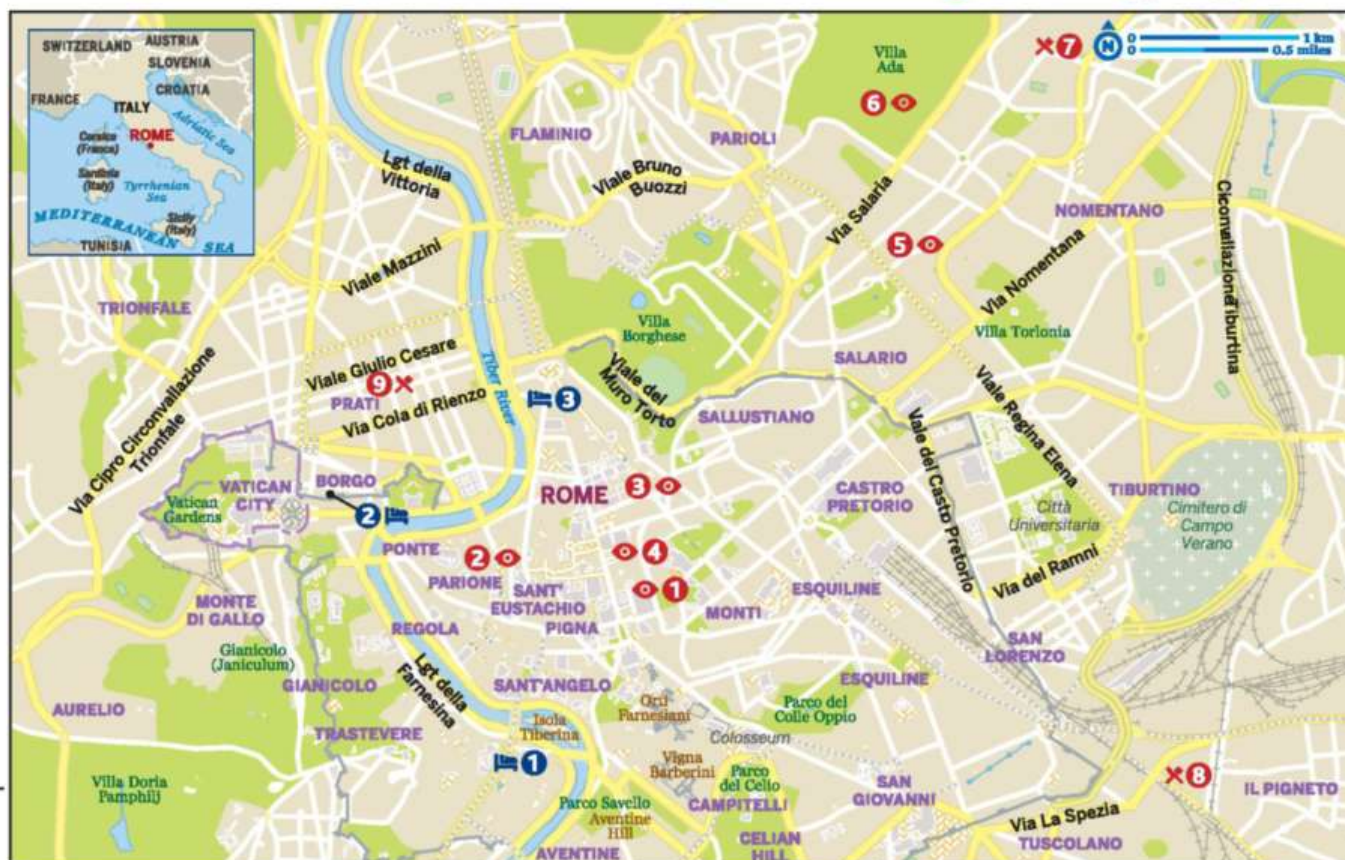
TURN OVER FOR MAP AND NUMBER LOCATIONS



## MINI GUIDE

### Hidden corners of Rome

Sights & Activities Eating Where to stay



## Rome essentials

### HOW TO GET AROUND

Singapore Airlines flies direct to Rome's Fiumicino airport, 18 miles west of the city (from US\$1,140; singaporeair.com), while Emirates and Qatar Airways fly from Kuala Lumpur with one stop (from US\$904.91; emirates.com). The easiest way to get into town from Fiumicino is by train (30 minutes; US\$19; trenitalia.com). Public transport tickets are valid on all bus, tram and metro lines (except into the airport). However, Rome's historic centre is quite compact and it's possible to explore much of it on foot.

### WHERE TO STAY

- 1 Accessed through a large stone arch on a cobbled Trastevere street, the six-room Arco del Lauro combines a rustic appeal with simple design. This is a popular place so book well ahead (arcodellauro.it; Via dell'Arco de Tolomei 27-29; from US\$124.93).
- 2 Tucked away in an alleyway under the Vatican walls, Hotel



The best of contemporary Italian design inside Babuino 181

Bramante exudes country-house charm with its cosy internal courtyard and elegant rooms (hotelbramante.com; Vicolo delle Palline 24; from US\$187.39).

- 3 A beautifully renovated old palazzo on a top shopping street, Babuino 181 offers discreet luxury with great attention to detail. A new annexe across the street continues the theme of understated elegance (romeluxurysuites.com; Via del Babuino 181; from US\$452.86).

## The know-how

### SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS

- **La Passeggiata** The early evening stroll is an important part of Roman life, where locals dress up, check out everyone else and enjoy the atmosphere. In June, the Lungo il Tevere festival on Isola Tiberina creates a new area for early evening wanderers.
- **Gianicolo 150** From June to September, an alfresco 'street art café' – effectively an outdoor living room – sets up on Gianicolo Hill, with sofas draped with pretty people, plus even prettier views over Rome.
- **Grattachecca** Partaking of some grattachecca (crushed ice covered in fruit and syrup) along the river becomes an intrinsic part of the evening stroll in summer. There are kiosks along the riverbank satisfying this very Roman need. Try Sora Mirella Caffè next to Ponte Cestio.



### FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's Rome (US\$21.99), Discover Rome (US\$21.99) and Pocket Rome (US\$12.99) are all useful guides; download chapters from Rome at lonelyplanet.com (US\$4.95). For more on bars, restaurants and nightspots visit 2night.it.

COMPILED BY NATALIE WILLMAN, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM DUNCAN GARWOOD AND ABIGAIL BLASI. PHOTOGRAPHS: DEMETRIO CARRASCO/AWL, FOOD COLLECTION/ALAMY, ALBERTO PIZZOLI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES, RICCARDO SALA/TIPS/SUPERSTOCK





Food stalls display their goods before the Aya Sofya

MINI GUIDE Sep/Oct 2015



# Restaurants in Istanbul

Turkey's signature dish is undoubtedly the kebab, and its cuisine has an honest base of simple mezes, salads and seafood. Eat home-style, ready-made dishes in casual lokantas or try modern takes on traditional cuisine.

## Lokantas

### KARAKÖY LOKANTASI 1

Known for its gorgeous turquoise-tiled interior, Karaköy Lokantası serves well-priced food to its loyal local clientele. It functions as a lokanta during the day, serving dishes such as hünkâr beğendi (slow-cooked lamb on aubergine purée) but at night it morphs into an ever-busy taverna, known as a meyhane ([karakoylokantasi.com](http://karakoylokantasi.com); Kemankes Caddesi 37a; closed Sun lunch; mezes from US\$3.12).



Beef kebab on yoghurt with walnut sauce at Çiya Sofrası

### KÖMÜR TÜRK MUTFAĞI 2

Located amid the wedding-dress shops on the main drag of the Fatih district is this five-floor Türk mutfağı (Turkish kitchen). The gleaming ground-floor space has a huge counter where ready-made dishes are displayed and where fresh meat and fish can be cooked to order ([komurturkmutfagi.com](http://komurturkmutfagi.com); Fevzi Paşa Caddesi 18; lunch daily; vegetable dishes from US\$2.50).

### ÇIYA SOFRASI 3

Musa Dağdeviren's lokanta across the Bosphorus in Kadıköy has gained culinary fame for showcasing dishes from the region surrounding the chef-owner's home city of Gaziantep. It's a great place to try Turkish regional specialties, while its next-door kebabçı (kebab restaurant) sells a huge variety of meat dishes. Neither sells alcohol ([ciya.com.tr](http://ciya.com.tr); Güneş libahçe Sokak 43; 11am–10pm; dishes from US\$4.22).

## Modern Turkish

### MEZE BY LEMON TREE 4

Chef Gençay Üçok creates some of the most interesting – and delicious – modern Turkish food seen in the city. Come to his small restaurant opposite the Pera Palace Hotel to sample triumphs such as monkfish casserole or grilled lamb sirloin with baked potatoes and red beets. Bookings essential ([mezze.com.tr](http://mezze.com.tr); Meşrutiyet Caddesi 83b; dinner daily; mains from US\$14.05).



Lokanta Maya features an ever-changing seasonal menu

### MIKLA 5

Local celebrity chef Mehmet Gürs is a master of Mod Med, and the Turkish accents on the menu here make his food memorable. Luxury surrounds, extraordinary views and professional service complete the experience. Try the delicious Trakya Kızırık lamb shank, consider a finale of the pistachio and halva ice cream and be sure to stop for a drink at the rooftop bar ([miklarestaurant.com](http://miklarestaurant.com); Marmara Pera Hotel, Meşrutiyet Caddesi 15; dinner Mon–Sat; three-course meal US\$70.27).

### LOKANTA MAYA 6

Critics and chowhounds alike rave about the dishes created by chef Didem Şenol at her stylish restaurant near the Karaköy docks. The author of a successful cookbook focusing on Aegean cuisine, Didem's food is light and occasionally quirky: expect to see dishes such as spicy shrimp with satsuma rice. You'll need to book for dinner; lunch is cheaper and more casual ([lokantamaya.com](http://lokantamaya.com); Kemankes Caddesi 35a; Mon–Sat; lunch mains from US\$6.25, dinner mains from US\$14.05).

## Best kebabs

### DEVELİ 7

Develi opened its first restaurant in 1912, but its most popular outlet is in Samatya, near the Great Wall of Theodosius. The succulent kebabs here often reflect the season – the keme kebabi (truffle kebab) is only served for a few weeks each year. Ask for a table on the roof terrace, which has great sea views ([develikebab.com](http://develikebab.com); Gümüşyüzük Sokak 7; daily; kebabs from US\$7.81).



Mixed grill in preparation at Istanbul institution Develi

### HAMDİ RESTAURANT 8

Hamdi Arpacı has been grilling kebabs made to recipes from Turkey's southeast since the 1960s. Try the yoğurtlu sakuska (yoghurt meze with aubergine, peppers and potato) followed by any of the kebabs (such as Fıstıklı kebab – veal and lamb mince with pistachio). It's extremely busy and staff turn tables quickly, so don't expect much in terms of personal service ([hamdirestorant.com.tr](http://hamdirestorant.com.tr); Kalçın Sokak 17; kebabs from US\$9.37).

### SUR OCAKBADI 9

Indulge in some people-watching while enjoying the grilled meats at this popular place, where tourists were a rare sight before chef Anthony Bourdain filmed a segment of No Reservations here. Consider the içli köfte (deep-fried lamb and onion meatballs with a bulgur coating), the çiğ köfte (meat pounded with spices and eaten raw) and the mixed kebab plate ([surocakbasi.com](http://surocakbasi.com); İtfaiye Caddesi 27; kebabs from US\$4.68).

TURN OVER FOR MAP AND NUMBER LOCATIONS



## MINI GUIDE

### Restaurants in Istanbul

✕ Eating 🛏 Where to stay



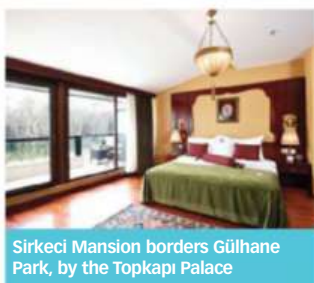
## Istanbul essentials

### HOW TO GET AROUND

Istanbul has two international airports. The more centrally located Atatürk receives direct flights from Singapore and Kuala Lumpur on Turkish Airlines (from US\$787.35; [turkishairlines.com](http://turkishairlines.com)), while the less convenient Sabiha Gökçen receives direct flights from both cities with Qatar Airways (from US\$766.68; [qatarairways.com](http://qatarairways.com)). Taxis to the centre are around US\$31.23 from Atatürk and US\$54.66 from Sabiha Gökçen. Havatas buses serve both airports (from US\$4.22; [havatas.com.tr](http://havatas.com.tr)), and Atatürk is also connected to Istanbul's metro system ([istanbul-ulasim.com.tr](http://istanbul-ulasim.com.tr)).

### WHERE TO STAY

- 1 Hallmarks of the Hotel Peninsula are friendly staff, comfy rooms and bargain prices. It has a terrace with sea views and hammocks. Basement rooms are dark, but have reduced prices ([hotelpeninsula.com](http://hotelpeninsula.com); Adliye Sokak 6, Cankurtaran; from US\$39.04).
- 2 The terrific Sirkeci Mansion has



Sirkeci Mansion borders Gülhane Park, by the Topkapı Palace

impeccable rooms, a roof terrace, indoor pool and hamam. Credit goes to the free entertainment programme, which includes cooking classes and walking tours ([sirkecimansion.com](http://sirkecimansion.com); Taya Hatun Sokak 5, Sirkeci; from US\$187.39).

- 3 Tomtom Suites is a suite hotel occupying a former Franciscan nunnery. Its décor is understated but elegant, with each suite comprising a marble bathroom with spa bath ([tomtomsuites.com](http://tomtomsuites.com); Tomtom Kaptan Sokak 18, Beyoğlu; from US\$218.62).

## The know-how

### WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

- The most famous meat dish is the kebab (şiş and döner) but köfte, saç kavurma (stir-fried cubed meat dishes) and güveç (meat and veg stews cooked in a terracotta pot) are common too.
- After the döner, the most popular fast food is pide (Turkish pizza), with a canoe-shaped base topped with cheese, mince meat or egg. Börek are pastries filled with cheese, spinach or potatoes.
- Turks love vegetables, fresh in summer and pickled in winter. The most popular summer salad is çoban salatası (shepherd's salad), with chopped tomatoes, cucumber, onion and pepper.
- For a sugar hit, try syrup-drenched baklava (pictured), fırın sütlaç (rice pudding with a hint of spice), and kadayıf (dough soaked in syrup and topped with a layer of clotted cream).



### FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's Istanbul (US\$21.99) is a comprehensive guide to the city, while Pocket Istanbul (US\$13.99) is ideal for short trips. Culinary Backstreets is a blog that explores the traditional food culture of Istanbul ([culinarybackstreets.com](http://culinarybackstreets.com)).

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A formerThe twinkling  
harbour lights of San  
Sebastián

MINI GUIDE Sep/Oct 2015



# Eating in San Sebastián

Sea and mountains lend a culinary richness to Spain's Basque Country – prawns and salted cod rub alongside steaks and jamón. Enjoy these fine ingredients in San Sebastián's many pintxos bars and exclusive restaurants.

## Pintxo bars

### ✕ LA CUCHARA DE SAN TELMO ①

This unfussy bar offers miniature nueva cocina vasca (Basque nouvelle cuisine) from a creative kitchen. Order from a blackboard menu offering delights such as carrilera de ternera al vino tinto (calf cheeks in red wine), with meat so tender it almost dissolves as it meets your lips (lacuchara desantelmo.com; Calle 31 de Agosto, 28; pintxos from US\$4).



Tantalising pintxos on display at the popular Bar Borda Berri

### ✕ BAR BORDA BERRI ②

Many locals swear blind that this outstanding little bar is now the best in the city. You won't find pintxos sprawled across the bar; they're prepared to order. Choose from a selection scribbled on a blackboard and grab a seat at the bar (there are no tables). The staff are happy to advise on the day's best choice but otherwise the house specials are pigs' ears and calves' cheeks (00 34 943 43 03 42; Calle Fermín Calbetón, 12; pintxos from US\$4).

### ✕ BERGARA BAR ③

The neighbourhood of Gros is a growing powerhouse in the battle of the pintxos and many locals now prefer to have their nibbles here and leave the old town to the tourists. This bar, which sits on the edge of a busy square, is one of the most highly regarded pintxo bars in Gros and has an array of plates piled on the bar counter as well as others chalked up on the board (00 34 943 27 50 26; Calle General Artetxe, 8; pintxos from US\$5).

## Michelin stars

### ✕ ARZAK ④

With three Michelin stars, chef Juan Mari Arzak takes some beating when it comes to nueva cocina vasca, and his restaurant is one of the best in Spain. The superb tasting menu includes innovative dishes such as 'egg with earthquake' – a poached egg with breadcrumbs and olive oil powder. Book well in advance (arzak.info; Avenida Alcalde José Elosegui, 273; tasting menu US\$234.13).



Roast pigeon breast with pansies at acclaimed restaurant Arzak

### ✕ MARTÍN BERASATEGUI RESTAURANT ⑤

Martín Berasategui earned his first Michelin star aged 26 and, 27 years later, has a total of seven. His San Sebastián restaurant, just outside the city, is considered one of the best in the world. Dishes show his scientific approach to food: roast red mullet with crystals of edible scales, soybean sprouts and cuttlefish, and mist of coffee and cacao over banana with whisky sorbet. Reserve ahead (martinberasategui.com; Calle Loidi, 4, Lasarte-Oria; tasting menu US\$250).

### ✕ AKELAÐE ⑥

As with most of the region's top nueva cocina vasca restaurants, the emphasis here is on using fresh, local produce and turning it into something unexpected. Dishes include 'desalted cod box' (crystallised cod, served in a box, on a bed of edible shavings – to look like straw – with cod tripe and tomato). The dining room has views over the Bay of Biscay – it's on a clifftop in the suburb of Igeldo, just west of the city (akelarre.net; Paseo Padre Orcolaga, 56; tasting menu US\$203).

## Seafood

### ✕ BODEGÓN ALEJANDRO ⑦

This highly regarded restaurant, next to the Bretxa market, has a relaxed feel to it. Both the tasting menu and the menu of the day feature seasonal ingredients and updated Basque dishes: look out for warm spider-crab salad, baby tomatoes stuffed with squid, and baked lobster (bodegonalejandro.com; Calle de Fermín Calbetón, 4; mains from US\$21.85).



There are no starched white tablecloths at Bodegón Alejandro

### ✕ RESTAURANTE MARIÑELA ⑧

You pay for the fabulous harbour-front setting, but the location also guarantees that the fish is so fresh it may well flop back off your plate and swim away. This is a popular spot for lunch and rightly so. Start with a plate of charred sardines and follow with the house special, grilled squid (00 34 943 42 13 88; Paseo del Muelle, 15; restaurant open from March to October; mains from US\$15.61).

### ✕ KASKAZURI ⑨

Upmarket Basque seafood is all the rage at this flash restaurant, which overlooks the sea and former home of your dinner. Kaskazuri cooks up a storm with the £18 menú del día, which may include dishes such as roasted cod with a mussel sauce and tenderloin of Iberian pork with pineapple chutney and poached pears in red wine (00 34 943 42 08 94; Paseo de Salamanca, 14; three-course menu of the day US\$28.10).

TURN OVER FOR MAP AND NUMBER LOCATIONS



## MINI GUIDE

### Eating in San Sebastián



## San Sebastián essentials

### TRANSPORT

There are no direct flights from Singapore and Kuala Lumpur to San Sebastián. British Airways offer two-stop flights from both cities from US\$2,455.21 ([britishairways.com](http://britishairways.com)). San Sebastián is easily navigated on foot, but if you're planning to see a lot of sights it's worth buying a San Sebastián Card for free or reduced admission to many sights and free transport (US\$20.29 for five days; buy at any tourist office).

### WHERE TO STAY

1 The nine rooms at Pensión Aida are bright and have wooden floors and exposed stone walls. The cheaper rooms are small and internal; for more space, go for a studio complete with kitchenette ([pensionesconencanto.com](http://pensionesconencanto.com); Calle Iztueta, 9; from US\$67.12; studio US\$93.65).

2 With a rich history – Queen Isabel II lived here during her exile – the beachside Hotel de Londres y de Inglaterra is still pretty regal. The 148 rooms are decorated in



Huge beds await at the recently refurbished Hotel Maria Cristina

muted tones and some have views over Playa de la Concha ([hlondres.com](http://hlondres.com); Calle Zubieta, 2; from US\$218.52).

3 Hotel Maria Cristina is a Belle Époque affair overlooking the River Urumea and close to the beach. Its 136 rooms are huge, with chandeliers, balconies and marble bathrooms ([starwoodhotels.com](http://starwoodhotels.com); Paseo República Argentina, 4; from US\$312.17).

## The know-how

### TOP BASQUE EATING EXPERIENCES

#### Pintxos crawl

Each two-bite slice of Basque cuisine is refined to an art form. Many are towering creations bedded on pieces of bread and pinned in place with toothpicks.

Locals eat one or two of the house specials at each bar; it may not be what's out in front of you, many of the best pintxos are the hot ones you order. Wash it down with txakoli (a sharp, local wine).

#### Bacalao al pil-pil

Salted cod and garlic in an olive-oil emulsion.

#### Chipirones en su tinta

Baby squid in its own ink.

#### Chuletón de buey

Enormous steaks served at sidrerías (cider bars) in the mountains near San Sebastián.



### TOP TIP

Nervous about braving pintxo bars alone or want to learn how to make tapas? San Sebastián Food runs pintxo tours (US\$125 for a 2½-hour tour of six bars, including wine) and cookery courses (five-hour pintxo class US\$211; [sansebastianfood.com](http://sansebastianfood.com)).

### FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's Spain (US\$27.99) has a chapter on the Basque Country which includes San Sebastián, and is also available to download at [lonelyplanet.com](http://lonelyplanet.com) (US\$4.95). The great blog [travelcookeat.com](http://travelcookeat.com) is by a San Sebastián resident and has a wealth of information on eating in the city. For fiction, Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (US\$15 from [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)) follows an expat American in 1920s San Sebastián.

COMPILED BY NATALIE MILLMAN, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM STUART BUTLER, PHOTOGRAPHS: MIKEL ALONSO, FSG/AGE, FOTOSTOCK, PETER HORREE/ALAMY, MARK READ, LÓPEZ DE ZUBIRIA/BODEGÓN ALEJANDRO





# WIN A 2-NIGHTS' STAY\* AT THE SAMAYA UBUD, BALI

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# WIN A 2-NIGHTS' STAY\* AT THE SAMAYA UBUD, BALI



The Samaya Ubud is spectacularly located amid the rice fields and verdant hillsides of the Ayung valley, it is a harmonious blend of cutting-edge design and lavish comfort, and the ideal place to relax in a tropical paradise.

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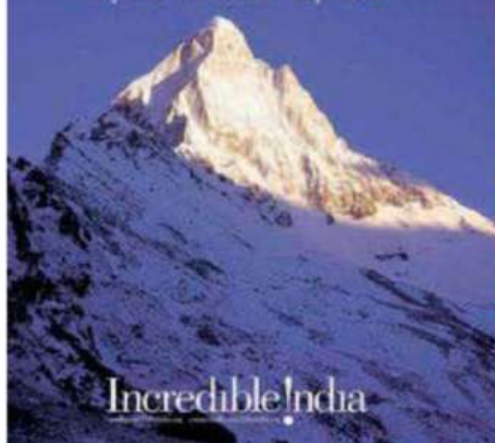
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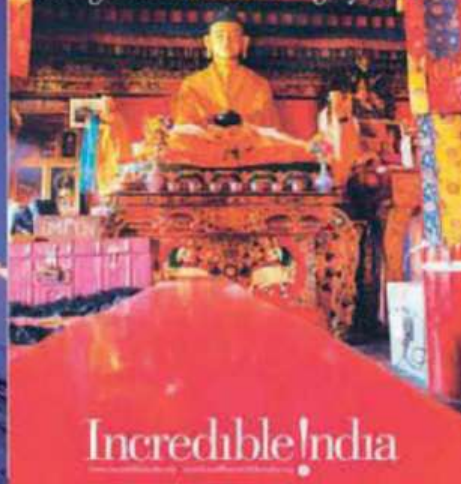


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